Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. NBP 1333
(USA: $1.25/NZ: $1.25) *$1.00

January 30, 1985 #252

RAM

DAVID BYRNE
A Head Rings Out

SOLID CITIZENS
LIME SPIDERS
TACTICS
HITMEN
NOT DROWNING, WAVING
HEEBEEGEEBEES
STRANGE TENANTS
CAREER CHOICES 1985 — Music Publishing/Screenwriting
ROCKMANSHIP IV! At Last!
SYDFEST THEATRE

(Pic: Ian Greene)

RAM letters

SEND YOUR 1985 RAM LETTERS TO : 3RD FLOOR, 52 FRANCIS ST, E.SYDNEY 2010.

THRU A LENS, DARKLY

Dear young person with a camera — wanna shoot gigs? Wanna get your stuff published in RAM maybe? From one who knows, here's what it takes: (1) the ability to reason with exasperating, officious people who know more about the 'biz' than the 'show'; (2) acceptance of the fact that you'll be working in extremely demanding and difficult situations, both photographically and physically (naturally, no accommodation is made for you whatsoever); (3) the realisation that it's not worth it.

Some practical examples of what the task involves... You'll be required to attend a Joe Cocker gig, only to be told you can only shoot three songs after which you're not welcome, you can piss off out of the auditorium. You'll have to sign a contract limiting what you can do with your Culture Club shots, meaning that maybe, just maybe you'll cover expenses *if* you sell one or two pix.

For INXS, another contract signing is necessary — this time stating that the management will get to keep three of your negatives, to do with what they wish. Not three prints or even the *use* of three negatives for some length of time, but *three negatives*. Full stop. This of course leaves you with nothing of any interest from the three-song shoot they allowed you.

At a Cure gig, you'll turn up only to find that too many photo-passes have been given out and space hasn't been made for even one photographer. Eventually all the photographers will be allocated a one-metre-square area on the side of the stage, where you'll all compete against each other for the best shot of the back of Robert Smith's head.

In a new twist to the norm at a Lou Reed gig, you'll be told that you can only shoot the encore. You're told that in the meantime you must sit in a certain section of the Entertainment Centre so you'll be out of the way — fair enough. Come encore time, you make your way to the front of the stage only to be confronted by a security guard with a girth perfectly suited to his job; he tells you that his instructions are that *nobody* goes past this point. You know that reasoning with this person is useless. You try anyway. Nothing. You now go home and write a letter to RAM.

What I can't understand is if we photographers are such a pain in the arse to everybody at gigs, why are we given photo-passes at all? And to you, Dear Reader, my apologies — some of my published pix have been often less than adequate. But under the circumstances, it was the best I could do (I expect they only get published because no other photographer came up with anything better on the night).

If you wanna have a go at shooting gigs, please do — it'd be good to have a new face to bitch and moan with. After all, there'll be plenty of time while being shafted around at gigs.

Tasso Taraboulsi,
Darlinghurst, NSW

THE REV. PAISLEY ADMONISHES US

When will you learn? Every year the Church prove themselves to be one of Australia's most popular bands, and have just about succeeded in shaking off the *Countdown/Dolly* image, and still you continue to ignore them for all but a couple of issues a year.

Sure, I understand you have to give room to what's charting on "the fucking football ladder", but to ignore a band that is so popular smells of some sort of bias. And going back to the fiasco that was the first *major* interview containing the misquotes, misconceptions and deceptions, I have to believe it's just part of the track record. Now that they've been replaced by Pseudo Echo "as the band most likely to make the cover of *Dolly*", I ask you to give us, yourself and more importantly *them* a fair go.

'And it's so easy to hurt me now
And you've forgotten anyhow
That certain ideas
Have changed through the years
I purchased some tears just to
See me through' — Stephen Kilbey
Just For You, Blurred Crusade

C. Ward,
Annandale, NSW

Seems some Church-goers are hard to please... You might notice that just about every major Australian band gets 'ignored' for 'all but a couple of issues a year'. No malice aforethought, we assure you... with just 26 issues a year and three times as many bands to accommodate, it gets a little difficult to be favouritist.

A CALL SIGN FROM THE BUSH

I'm writing to voice total agreement with Leeton's League Of Musical Connoisseurs (RAM Nov. 9 '84). Their summing up of the acoustical opportunities in this part of NSW was spot-on accurate.

A few years ago there was some respite when JJ-AM could be picked up in the evenings. I am a farm boy and used to avail myself of the opportunity by volunteering for the night shift of tractor driving and rock away till 6 am, keeping abreast of new Oz and OS sounds — but then JJ went FM and we were isolated once more.

Now we can listen to the commercial, dated pop that the local stations serve up, and save the dedicated rockers that play contemporary and interesting music on the local community-access FM (which only serves the immediate town area), we are a culturally deprived minority.

If Aunty is going to spend thousands to set up a national, classical FM network, why not add JJJ to that network? The land lines must already exist, the transmitters and the towers are already there. This would do great things for Oz music as well, as the local AMs will only play recognised bands that have already broken. In this era of equal opportunity, why is the bush discriminated against?

Yours in starved Ears...

Alistair Jones,
Wagga, NSW

JOHNNY-GONE-LATELY...

To the Johnnys...

After reading your article in RAM (issue 251) I was totally disgusted in the way you put Roddy Ray'da down. You guys are fucked.

Well, it just goes to show how weak you guys really are to publicly slander Roddy, who pulled you guys together, wrote all your material, and then you had the hide to sack him from his band. That's the way, and the thanks he gets. Well, you deserve everything *you* get. Beware.

Angry ex-Johnnys fan,
NSW

P.S. Who is Ross Wilson anyway?

... And we thought Johnnys fans had a sense of humour! If you could read, you'd notice that Roddy *quit* — if he'd been sacked, he'd never have left!

WHILE WE GENTLY SLEPT...

Clinton Walker's article on the State of (The) Independents (RAM, 4 January 1985) makes the common mistake of defining the independent market down to the musical area of pop/rock producers. Just in case your readers don't know that *other* types of music do exist, I would like to point out that the major part of our independent industry is involved in producing records of Australian jazz, folk, contemporary songwriters, country and country rock, classical, show music, ethnic fushion, kids' music, experimental classical music, comedy and a lot of other music.

Wake up, RAM — there is a lot of other music being made, but not necessarily being played (on radio). Hot may be doing good things for fringe rock, but Larrikin, Move, Raven, Grevillia, Tempo, Talunga, Third Degree, Hunter (to name only a few Australian indie labels) are also alive and very well.

Cheers,
Warren Fahey,
Chief Larrikin.

Point taken, Warren — we do have our limitations, but promise to do better this term.

ANYONE FOR ROAST PORK?

Me and my mates have just recorded this really great song about the Bergen riots.

The lyric goes: *'An overturned police van burns in a rock-strewn street in Bergen'*, and then Jimmy plays this incredible solo which goes for four whole minutes.

Jimmy says that Bergen is the biggest city in Norway. (If you don't count Oslo.)

Regards,
A friend of Jimmy's,
Norway.

Fine, but what rhymes with 'Bergen'?

A TOUCHING ANALOGY...

Madonna singing *Like A Virgin* is like the Ayatollah Khomeini recording *The Lord's Prayer*. And best Australian independent single of '84? Latex Cabaret's *Going Rhino* by a neck (and a horn) from Beasts Of Bourbon's *Psycho*.

Alf Romeo,
Wollongong, NSW

TO CLARIFY AN OILY DISCOURSE...

After reading Andrew McMillan's review on Midnight Oil's new album I felt the need to elaborate on some of his points.

Midnight Oil's statements are not limited to Australians, as they have a universal meaning. Through using the Australian aborigine as the main subject in *Kosciusko* and *Jimmy Sharman's Boxers*, the Oils have made an undeniably Australian statement which can be interpreted also by non-Australians. The plight of the aborigines is similar to the plight of other native people such as the American Indian. Universal themes combined with Australian characteristics are a major feature of *Red Sails In The Sunset*.

It is ironic that the album was recorded overseas; when Australia is criticised, the criticism often comes from overseas people staying in Australia. Australia usually responds to this criticism quickly. When Australians criticise their own country, they are looked upon with scorn. Midnight Oil's previous statements have had little effect upon people over 30. Most of these statements were made in Australia. Their latest album was recorded in Japan — here is where the irony lies; now that the Oils have created their statements overseas and have links with the NDP, Australians 30 and over now recognise the criticisms.

This point leads to my opinion that Australians are gullible and often stupid. Midnight Oil's new album is to be compared with the writings of Judith Wright and the paintings of Russell Drysdale — each describes Australia and its psyche in a manner true. The only thing missing from their latest effort is Vegemite.

Bruce Corby,
Stockinbingal, NSW

The trouble is that the best local studios have waiting lists of up to 18 months...

RAM ALIVE IN '85!!

And they said we wouldn't last... Shows how wrong *The Age* can be! It ain't easy being independent — just ask Warren Fahey at Larrikin Records! — but that's one of the privileges of going it alone: you can get holier-than-thou about it.

If you're wondering why there's less *musical* content than usual in this New Year edition, it's because we're still on holiday. And figuring a lot of you are too, we thought we'd do something a little different. If you wanna bitch, write us a letter — that's what this page is for. Or if you wanna send money, kudos or gifts (never too late!), do that too. That's what *we're* here for.

We may not be big, but we're cheap — that's why we're better than the competition. And it's also the reason why — come March — we'll be TEN YEARS OLD! (Just like Triple J and *Countdown*). So stick around; we'll be here for... oh, *eons*. Keep reading, and have a great '85.

Cheers, PHIL S.

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Transit Lounge

PEOPLE. EVENTS. THINGS ON THE MOVE

MUSHROOM SNARES THE ANGELS

With a new album and single due for rush-release at the end of this month, the Angels have departed CBS and signed with Mushroom Records. This coup would tend to consolidate Mushroom's strong showing in the latter half of 1984 with the crack trio of Barnes, Clapton and Split Enz, plus successful singles from the Models, Machinations and DD Smash.

"After Mushroom's great last quarter for '84, I couldn't think of a better way to get 1985 rocking than being able to sign the Angels," chief fungoid Michael Gudinski said last week with barely concealed relish. Following the solid chart performance of the current single, *Between The Eyes*, the Angels release a followup entitled *Look The Other Way* in tandem with their first LP for Mushroom, *Two Minute Warning*, within the fortnight. Recorded largely in the States with producer Ashley Howe (Queen, Yes, Uriah Heep), the album has already been released in the US — where it was the 'second most added' on FM radio last week.

SUMMER TOURS SMORGASBORD
— Pick A Period, Choose A Style

Whatever your taste, there's a touring act for YOU over the coming months. Among the Big Names confirmed for these shores are ROD STEWART (Jan/Feb), THE RAMONES (Feb), NEIL YOUNG (March) and QUEEN in April. THE STRANGLERS are also due to visit within the near future as part of their current world tour.

On the heavily-tipped list are PHIL COLLINS, CHAKA KHAN, RICKIE LEE JONES, MADONNA, TWISTED SISTER and GEORGE BENSON. ZZ TOP look to have been postponed due to bassist Dusty Hill's shooting accident (*see story elsewhere in Transit Lounge),* while negotiations for BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN are advancing steadily. THE TRIFFIDS mount their slightly delayed homecoming tour in February, whilst joining JIMMY BARNES and Texan JOE ELY on the eastern leg of their double-header are Brisbane's TREBLE CLEFS. MODELS are currently plundering the East Coast, while THE ANGELS will mount a national tour in support of their new album next month...

The Stranglers

Neil Young

A three-ring circus of a slightly different bent has just surfaced in Sydney... A trio consisting of this country's most respected (notorious?) rock writers — ex RAM Editor **Greg Taylor**, music video 'expert' **Phil Tripp** and trivialist extraordinaire **Glen A. Baker** — has concocted ***'The Australian Entertainment Reporter'***, a new strain of Rockmanship (see P. 18-19) for the world at large. Actually, it's an information service on Australian Video, Music and Film available to syndicated trade and consumer publications anywhere in the known world (and probably beyond). "There will be openings for other local writers and also photographers," says Tripp of the venture. "Though let it be known that I am an *expert*." When quizzed for proof of this lofty proclamation, Tripp replied: "An expert is someone who makes three correct guesses in a row." Both Taylor and Baker have declined to comment...

Intrigue continues to envelope last month's accidental shooting of **ZZ Top**'s **Dusty Hill** following a gig in home-state Texas. Apparently, his wife was 'helping him undress' when a Derringer handgun concealed in his boot somehow discharged, wounding the grizzled bassman in the stomach... Expect a further postponement of Top's long-awaited Australian tour until both investigations and convalescence are completed.

Sydney protopunks **X** have replaced long-standing drummer Steve Caifero with the equally hard-hitting **Cathy Green** (ex Cough Cough). Though bassist **Ian Rilen** is currently touring with **Illustrated Man** (featuring four other ex members of Rose Tattoo), X is to continue as a sporadic entity.

See, hear and talk about ***Helen Keller: The Musical***, currently at Kinsela's in Sydney — "a dream to dance becomes the nightmare of megastardom"! *A Chorus Line* brought you to your feet; *Annie* brought you to tears; *Helen Keller* is a fitting climax. (White canes and dark glasses *do not* guarantee free admission.)

Despite disappointing patronage, a twelve-hour musical marathon at Sydney's Entertainment Centre has managed to raise several thousand dollars towards the rapidly snowballing **Ethiopian Relief Fund**, already swelled by monumental sales of the **Band Aid** single. Among the bands who donated their time to this most worthy of endurance tests were **QED, Swanee, Dropbears, Strange Tenants, Flaming Hands, DD Smash, Non-Stop Dancers,** the **Johnnys, Avion, Boss, Wet Taxis, Roberts Frost** and the **HeeBeeGeeBees** — with comic relief provided by **George Smilovici** and **Vince Sorrenti**.

... Meanwhile, the ghouls just had to surface — reports from England cite appearances of pirate 'Feed The World' T-shirts on sale for exorbitant prices, cashing in on the Ethiopian tragedy. Band Aid organiser **Bob Geldof** and his record company (**Phonogram**) have urged fans to purchase only official merchandise, identified by special computer-printed labels and available through selected reputable dealers. There's also news of some record shops in the UK exploiting the record-breaking success of the Band Aid single through overcharging, not to mention an ongoing battle under way for the waiving of government sales tax on all Band Aid merchandise. Humanity, huh? Get your vigilante squads together —there's bound to be the odd creep capitalist trying it on over here...

Prior to heading overseas in search of a producer for their next album, **Models** are to undertake an extensive East Coast tour under the quaintly verbose legend: 'A Holiday Without Models Is A Holiday Wasted'. Assuming they manage to find an appropriate overseer *and* write some new material, the band will return to begin work on their fourth album late next month. May promises an even more exhaustive tour of Australia and New Zealand (along with the anticipated release of said album), followed by yet another OS jaunt... Wot, *more* holidays?

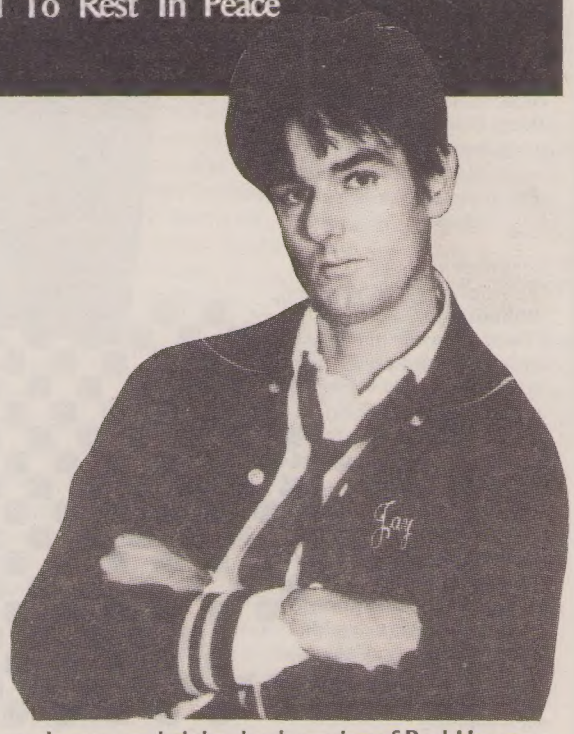
No longer an entity is **Split Enz**, whose various members have already launched themselves into planned individual pursuits. Though not before smashing indoor attendance records (previously held by the **Beatles**!) in Wellington and Dunedin on the home stretch of their 'Enz With A Bang' tour...

Catch mah fall, but don't let the sun come up... **Billy Idol** celebrated his 29th birthday last month with a lavish bean-out at some (s)wank New York club... So as to keep the rage happening well past dawn, he requested the owner to black the windows — obviously overawed by the bottle-blond's whiplash lipcurl, the lackey complied. At last word, the party's *still* happening...

While **Madonna** plans to do more than lip-synch her first 'real' concert tour of the States in March, speculation grows that she might even flash her gums and bellybutton in Australia later this year. Expect a rush on binoculars real soon...

Let's Get It On... what, bra and suspenders!? Hard to believe, but the dirt's already flying as author **David Ritz** prepares his 'definitive biography' on the late great **Marvin Gaye**. Word has it that Mr Macho was a part-time transvestite, though what world-famous soul singers (especially dead ones) do in the privacy of their own bedrooms is hardly anyone's business. Then again, so *that's* why he sought Sexual Healing...

VALE PAUL HEWSON: MASTER SONGWRITER/MUSICIAN
— May He Be Permitted To Rest In Peace



At press time, mystery and bitter innuendo surrounded the shock passing of Paul Hewson, Dragon keyboardist and writer of some of the best pop songs ever committed to Australian vinyl. Hewson's body was discovered on Thursday, January 10 in a car parked outside a friend's house in his hometown Auckland. Immediately, the unsavoury inferences sprang forth — even before his family and friends had buried him, Hewson became the brunt of sensationalist tabloid speculation, none of it substantiated.

Variously, he has been impugned as a drug user and seller, and linked with the upper echelons of the notorious Mr Asia syndicate. Most press accounts have already decided for themselves that Hewson died as a direct result of a "drugs-and-alcohol overdose". This despite the fact that the outcome of an autopsy has yet to be revealed, and that an official inquest has already been ordered. Of course, Hewson and his family have no defence against such callous disregard for the memory of one of the great talents in Australasian music.

What's past is past. Though it's true that various members of Dragon have been named in the Stewart Royal Commission into drug trafficking, none has ever been charged as a result. That speaks for itself, and this is hardly the time to rake through the muck for the sake of a front-page shock/horror 'exclusive'. Rather, Paul Hewson should be remembered for his immeasurable contribution to Australian music. As the writer of such masterful distillations of pop as *Get That Jive, April Sun In Cuba, Are You Old Enough* and *Sunshine,* his talent as a musician was beyond reproach. THIS is his legacy.

His death remains as an untimely shock to those who were close to him, and every lover of music — it's the very least to expect that he be revered for his positive life force, not the darker aspects that overshadow his passing. It remains ironic that at the time of his death, Hewson was known to have been happier, healthier and more musically fulfilled than he'd been for several years. Whatever the dirt flung in his wake, he'll be missed as a player, a friend, an unassailable talent. His is a tragic loss.

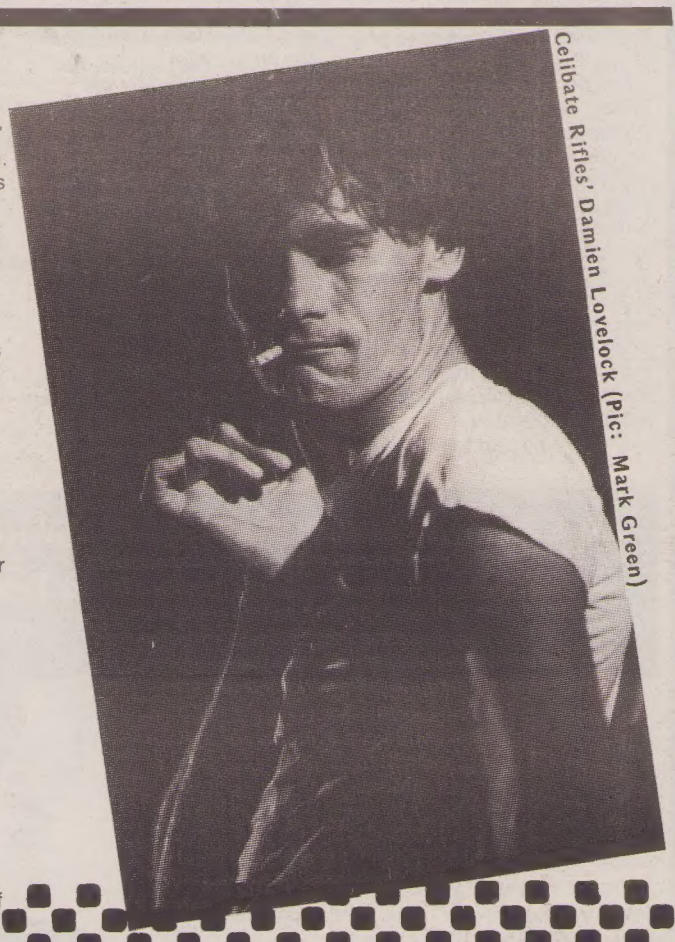
Transit Lounge

PEOPLE EVENTS. THINGS ON THE MOVE

TRIPLE JAY TURNS TEN ——OILS TAKE TO WATER

'Tis written in the Book of Genesis that Sydney's first rock FM station, 2JJJ began life as 2JJ on January 19, 1975. That being exactly ten years ago, JJJ has plenty cause to celebrate. And it's precisely what the station has been doing all this month, under the wildly flapping flag: 'JJJanuary — A Birthday Celebration'.

The festivities reached an auspicious peak last weekend with a very special concert. Midnight Oil, by way of repaying tremendous early support afforded the band by the station when both were in their infancy, performed live to 300 of the privileged faithful on Goat Island, in Sydney Harbour. The show was filmed and digitally recorded as a joint undertaking by JJJ, ABC-FM and ABC TV, and is to be simulcast through all three media this Saturday at 10.25 pm. As such, everyone has a chance to join the privileged faithful in celebrating this unique event all over again — in the comfort of their own sight'n'sound lounge. Not to be missed...

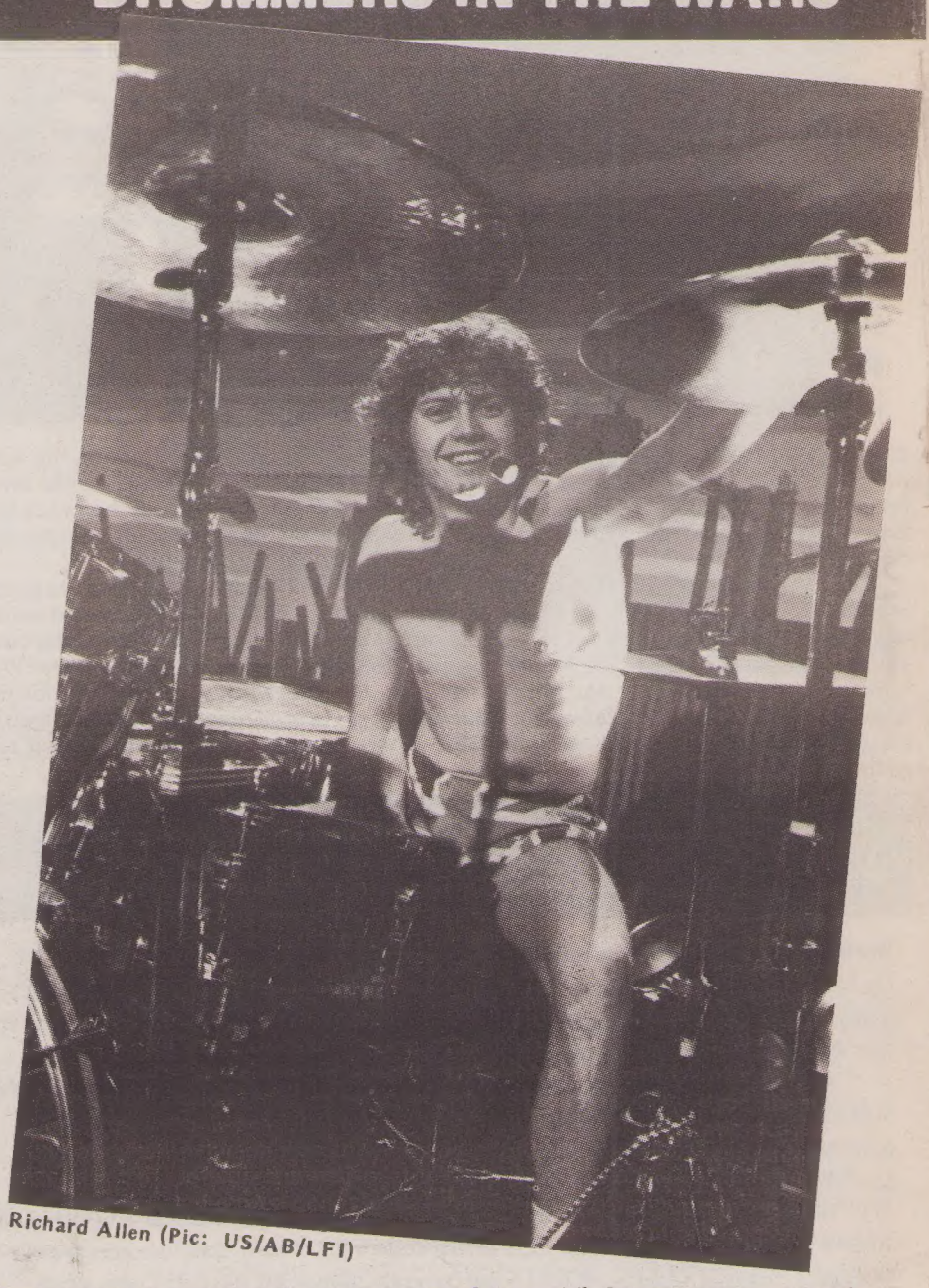


Celibate Rifles' Damien Lovelock (Pic: Mark Green)

On an even more frivolous note, four of Sydney's most celebrated independents threaten a 'national roadshow' tour set to roll later this month. Billed somewhat cryptically as **'Rorty Goes To Collingwood'**, this undoubtedly liquid junket pulls together the **Celibate Rifles, Wet Taxis, Died Pretty** and **Mushroom Planet** for an eight-date assault on Adelaide, Brisbane and points in between (*See Gigsville*). All four bands are to be poured into a 50-seater bus (with specially engaged driver, natch) scheduled to leave Sydney on January 22. Rumours of an on-board bar and video screen are yet to be confirmed, though local liquor outlets have already reported a sharp upturn in sales — unusual for this time of year. Prepare ye, and thank joint organisers **Hot Records** and **Rorty Dog Promotions** for what they describe as "an event of as yet unequalled action — see it or forever hold your peace".

... Which leads us (appropriately) to **'Working Without Nets'**, a celebration of Circus, Fashion and Music at Sydney's Wentworth Park for three nights only from January 25. Appearing (consecutively) over the weekend will be **Hunters & Collectors, Dynamic Hepnotics** and **Eurogliders**, along with the famed **Sole Brothers Circus** and a fashion show featuring 15 of Australia's top designers. Tickets ($15.90) available from Mitchells Bass and 'selected boutiques', and the three-ring extravaganza kicks out at 8pm each evening...

DRUMMERS IN THE WARS



Richard Allen (Pic: US/AB/LFI)

Road accidents have visited disaster upon two of the world's foremost hard rock bands over recent weeks. Last month, Finnish outfit HANOI ROCKS' drummer 'Razzle' was killed instantly when a high-powered sports car driven by Motley Crue lead singer Vince Neil aquaplaned and hit another vehicle at Redondo Beach, near LA. Hanoi Rocks had begun their first American tour just days before the tragedy struck, and it's believed that Neil will face manslaughter charges as a result.

Last week, DEF LEPPARD drummer Richard Allen had his left arm torn off in another auto accident, this time in the UK. Although surgeons attempted to rejoin the severed limb, an infection set in soon after the complex operation and amputation became necessary. At press time Allen's condition was described as 'stable'; his female passenger at the time of the accident, a close personal friend known only as 'Mirium', is also considered out of danger. Allen's future with Def Leppard is understandably in doubt, though it's reported he will not be replaced. Cards and letters of condolence may be sent to Allen care of the following address: 89 Saltergate Chesterfield, S40 IUS England..

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OY! SUFFERING FROM INFORMATION FALLOUT?!? YOU NEED YOUR READING HABITS EXAMINED!

Phil

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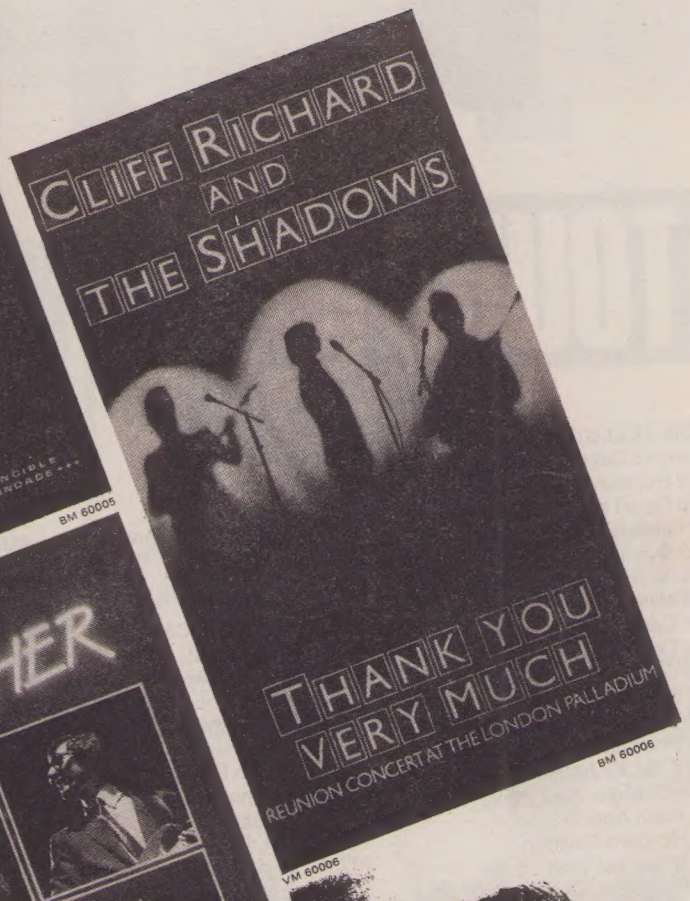

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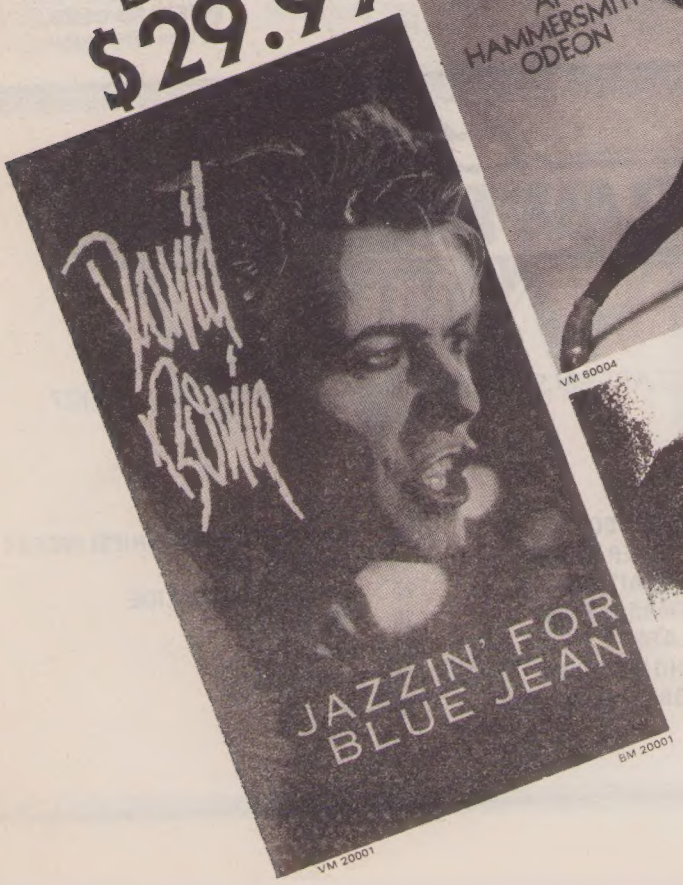


DURAN DURAN
Dancing On The Valentine
$25.99

GIGS VILLE

TOURS

DR. FEELGOOD
Jan.18 Calamvale Hotel
19 Bombay Rock
20 Royal Mail Hotel
21 Melanesian Village
22 Byron Bay Services
23 Newcastle Weston Workers
24 Newcastle Workers
25 Campbelltown Leagues
26 Dee Why Hotel (Early)
26 Caringbah Inn (Late)
27 Mosman (Early)
27 West. Leagues (Late)
29 Sweethearts
JOE ELY /JIMMY BARNES
Jan.30 Melb. Fest. Hall
31 Adel. Apollo Stad.
2 Hordern Pavilion
3 Bris. Fest. Hall
5 Perth Ent. Cent.
7 Dee Why Hotel
8 Chevron
9 Chevron
HEEBEE GEEBEES
Jan.17 Enmore Theatre
18 Enmore Theatre
19 Enmore Theatre
QUEEN
April Dates and
Venues T.B.A.
RAMONES
Feb. Dates and
Venues T.B.A.
LOU REED
Jan.17 Selinas
19 Auckland (NZ)

ROD STEWART
Jan.29 Syd. Ent. Cent.
30 Syd. Ent. Cent.
31 Syd. Ent. Cent.
5 Melb. Ent. Cent.
6 Melb. Ent. Cent.
7 Melb. Ent. Cent.
9 Melb. Ent. Cent.
12 Adel. Memorial Drive
15 Perth Ent. Cent.
VAN MORRISON
Feb. 22 Perth Ent. Cent.
25 Melb. Ent. Cent.
1 Adel. Thebarton Theatre
4 Bris. Fest. Hall
7 Syd. Ent. Cent.
WHAM
Jan.22 Melb. Ent. Cent.
23 Melb. Ent. Cent.
24 Melb. Ent. Cent.
26 Syd. Ent. Cent.
27 Syd. Ent. Cent.
NEIL YOUNG
March 1 Perth Ent. Cent.
5 Adel. Memorial Drive
8 Melb. Fest. Hall
14 Syd. Ent. Cent.
20 Bris. Chandler Velodrome

N.S.W.

ACCESSORIES
18 Hotel Bondi
20 Nth. Cronulla Hotel
26 Roxon
AD LIB
18 West Ryde Hotel

AMAZING WOOLLOOMOOLOOSERS
18 Dee Why Hotel
23 Tivoli
24 Mosman Hotel
25 Caringbah Inn
26 Mona Vale Hotel
27 Local Inn
ARMS AND LEGS
19 Dee Why Hotel
25 Picadilly Hotel
A.U.
24 Shanney's
AUSTEN TAYSHUS
25 Balmain Leagues

BAM BAM
19 Dee Why Hotel
BEAR GARDEN
30 Picadilly Hotel
BEATNIX
18 Sydney Cove Tav.
19 Rooty Hill RSL
23 Palais
24 Sheilas
25 Mona Vale Hotel
26 Miranda Hotel
27 Maroubra Seals
BIG RED TRACTOR
19 Sydney Cove Tav.
27 Picadilly Hotel
BIRDS OF PREY
18 Local Inn
BIRTH OF MIRTHA
26 Performance Space
BLEACH BOYS
18 Lismore Workers
19 Kingscliffe Hotel
20 Grafton Workers
23 Playroom
24 Playroom
25 Playroom
26 Playroom
27 Playroom
30 Greenfields Tav.

BLUES BROS. REVIVAL BAND
22 Collegians
23 Greenfields Tav.
25 Dee Why Hotel
26 Chester Hill RSL
27 Doyalson RSL
BOBBY SOX
18 Local Inn
19 Royal Antler
BODYCURVE
18 Chester Hill Hotel
24 Stallions
KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
23 Toronto Bowling
24 Mona Vale Hotel
25 Wentworthville (Early)
25 Manzil (Late)
26 Hawkesbury Sports
27 Caringbah Inn
CYRIL B. BUNTER
18 Tathra Hotel
BUSHWACKERS
22 Bluegum Hotel
23 Sth. Cross Club (ACT)
24 Ingleburn RSL (Early)
24 Sweethearts (Late)
25 Central Coast Leagues
26 Domain (Early)
26 Bankstown RSL (Late)
27 Panthers
CALL BOYS
18 Coffs Harbour Crystals
19 Sth. Grafton RSL
20 Wooli Hotel
CAMERA EN PARIS
23 Picadilly Hotel
30 Picadilly Hotel
CHAIN
18 Chevron
19 Corrimal Leagues
20 Caringbah Inn
21 Dee Why Hotel
RICHARD CLAPTON
19 Byron Bay Services
20 Lismore Hotel
29 Newcastle Workers
30 Central Coast Leagues
31 Sweethearts
CLIMBING FRAME
26 Performance Space
COCKROACHES
18 Dee Why Hotel
19 Goulburn Workers
23 Tivoli
24 Bayview Tav.
25 Caringbah Inn
26 Blacktown RSL
27 Local Inn
CRASH—CUPS
18 Trade Union Club
22 Sandringham Hotel
29 Sandringham Hotel
CRYSTAL SET
19 Chevron
DAYTIME ACTORS
18 Collegians
DELLTONES
18 West. Leagues
19 Cabravale Services
24 Central Coast Leagues
31 Woonoona RSL
D.D.SMASH
23 Shellharbour Workers
24 Shellharbour Workers
25 Roxon

26 Hills Inn Hotel
27 Parkway Hotel
30 Tivoli
31 Dee Why Hotel
DIED PRETTY
19 Chevron
DRAGON
22 Pt. Macquarie RSL
23 Taree RSL
25 Wagga Rules
26 Royals (ACT)
27 Royals (ACT)
29 Newcastle Workers
30 Central Coast Leagues
31 Sweethearts
THE DREAMING
20 Cock And Bull
24 Castle Inn
DUTCH TILDERS
18 Chevron
DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
26 Wentworth Park
EUROGLIDERS
19 Selinas
20 Manly Vale Hotel
22 Shellharbour Workers
23 St. George Sailing
24 Wentworthville Leagues
25 Revesby Workers
26 Peaches And Cream
FAT TIME
18 Jolly Roger
19 Hotel Bondi
20 All Nations Club
24 Picadilly Hotel
25 Jewel's Tav.
28 All Nations Club
31 Picadilly Hotel
THE FLIES
18 Gordon Golf
26 Sheilas
FOREVER FIFTEEN
25 Tourmaline Hotel
26 Merimbula RSL
27 Merimbula RSL
GENERATION
18 Asquith Leagues
19 Jolly Roger
20 St. Mary's Band
22 Sheilas
23 Cock And Bull
24 West Ryde Hotel
25 Asquith Leagues
26 Miranda Hotel
29 Sheilas
30 Cock And Bull
GOANNA
18 Bankstown Sports
19 Doyalson RSL
20 Fanny's
GO—BETWEENS
25 Dee Why Hotel
GRIZZER
18 Castle Inn
HATRICK
22 Bluegum Hotel
23 Sth. Cross Club (ACT).
24 Ingleburn RSL (Early)
24 Sweethearts (Late)
25 Central Coast Leagues
26 Domain (Early)
26 Bankstown RSL (Late)
27 Panthers
HEAD FIRST
18 Greengate Hotel

HOT DIGGETTY DOGS
23 Greengate Hotel
24 Yagoona Hotel
HUNGRY YOUNG MEN
21 St. James Tav.
22 Strawberry Hill
23 Dapto Leagues
25 Pacific Palms Rec.
26 Manning River Sailing
27 Doyalson RSL
HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS
25 Wentworth Park
IN CROWD
18 Beattie St.
19 Trade Union Club
24 Beattie St.
25 Trade Union
JEFF ST. JOHN
23 West Ryde Hotel
THE JOHNNYS
31 Mona Vale Hotel
THE JONES
25 Picadilly Hotel
JOHN PAUL YOUNG
18 Fairfield RSL
19 Local Inn
22 Twin Town Services
23 Twin Town Services
24 Twin Town Services
25 Twin Town Services
26 Twin Town Services
KAM—SHA
25 Hills Inn Hotel
26 Picadilly Hotel
JOHNNY KANNIS
25 Lithgow Workers
26 Corrimal Leagues
27 St. George Budapest
LITTLE RIVER BAND
27 Taree RSL
MAGNETICS
18 Shellharbour Inn
19 Beattie St.
22 Beattie St.
MENTAL AS ANYTHING
18 Cronulla Workers
19 Blacktown RSL
20 Panthers
22 Sweethearts
23 St. George Basin Coun.
24 Batemans Bay RSL
25 Tathra Hotel
26 Tathra Hotel
METHODS OF DANCE
19 Greengate Hotel
23 Student Prince Hotel
MILKY BAR KIDS
19 Picadilly Hotel
23 Bull And Bush
27 Hopetoun Hotel
MODELS
18 Thiroul Leagues
19 Merimbula RSL

MOTIVATORS
25 St. Mary's Band
26 Goulburn Workers
MOVING PICTURES
22 Plantation Hotel
23 Cardiff Workers
24 Nth. Ryde Hotel
25 Tourmaline Hotel
MUSTARD CLUB
25 Dee Why Hotel

NATURALS
21 Manzil
25 Roxon
31 Mona Vale Hotel
NEMO
18 Bluegum Hotel
NEVER NEVER
23 Golden Sheath
26 Newcastle Workers
NON STOP DANCERS
23 West Sub. Leagues
26 Mona Vale Hotel
OTHER VOICES
19 Rehearsal Room
23 Mosman Hotel
24 Yugal Soccer
PARTY GIRLS
18 Mittagong RSL
19 Tourmaline Hotel
20 Parkway Hotel
21 St. James Tav.
PASSION
18 Shellharbour Workers
20 Caringbah Inn
25 Rooty Hill RSL
26 Sheilas
27 Moby Dicks
PHOTOPLAY
29 Newcastle Workers
30 Central Coast Leagues
POLES APART
22 Manzil
29 Strawberry Hill
THE PROMISE
23 Picadilly Hotel
26 Hills Inn Hotel
31 Sweethearts
PSEUDO ECHO
18 Bankstown Sports
20 Wests Leagues
QED
22 Didis
23 Cardiff Workers
24 Tivoli
RAVEN
18 St. Mary's Band
RAYBEATS
18 Cronulla Workers
19 Bankstown RSL
20 Panthers
22 Sweethearts
23 St. George Basin Coun.
24 Batemans Bay RSL
25 Tathra Hotel
26 Tathra Hotel
REDGUM
18 Plantation Hotel
19 Sth. Grafton Services
20 Byron Bay Arts
23 Seagulls
24 Seagulls
27 Tarnworth Fest.
RIVER RATS
19 Bluegum Hotel
ROBERTS FROST
18 Campbelltown Leagues
19 Panthers
20 St. George Budapest
25 Balmain Leagues
RICK SABRE
18 Jarvis Bay RSL
19 Sussex Inlet RSL
20 Shoalhaven Heads Hotel
23 Student Prince Hotel
24 Sylvania Hotel

SCREAMING TRIBESMEN
19 Chevron
SEAMONSTERS
25 Hip Hop Club
SILHOUETTE
18 Sheilas
19 Governors Pleasure
25 Collegians
SKOLARS
19 Syd. Cove Tav.
25 Hopetoun Hotel
SOFT TOYS
23 Didis
SOUTHERLY BUSTER
20 Dee Why Hotel
STORMY MONDAY
27 Bundeena RSL
TABLEWAITERS
18 Strawberry Hill
TACTICS
18 Mosman Hotel
19 Chevron
23 Hip Hop Club
26 Performance Space
TEDDY BEARS
18 Blacktown RSL
19 Campbelltown RSL
20 St. Mary's Band
21 Didis
THESE CARS COLLIDE
25 Strawberry Hill
THIS IS THIS
21 Strawberry Hill
TIME AFTER TIME
18 Aust. Hotel
19 Catalina Count.
23 Caringbah Inn
25 Collegians
THE TRIBE
19 Hopetoun Hotel
TRICK CYCLISTS
18 Panthers
TRILOBITES 18 Mosman Hotel
UNDERCOVERS
18 Rooty Hill RSL
24 Namatjira Hotel
25 West Ryde Hotel
URBAN GUERILLAS
19 Forrest Lodge Hotel
21 Sandringham Hotel
25 Taren Point Hotel
26 Forrest Lodge Hotel
28 Sandringham Hotel
31 Vulcan Hotel
VA VA VA
18 Sheilas
WAITA
18 Carmens
30 Annabel's
WANDERERS
18 Banjo's
24 Nowra Bridge Tav.
WET TAXIS
18 Hills Inn Hotel
19 Syd. Cove Tav.
ZIPS
18 Tivoli
19 Tivoli
20 Ainslie Rugby
22 The Club, Kings X
23 Caringbah Inn
24 Eastwood Hotel
25 Taree RSL
26 Hornsby RSL

VIC.

BRIAN CADD BAND
18 De Marcos Hotel
19 The Venue
20 Prospect Hill Hotel
KARL VAN EST
18 Sandown Park Hotel
19 Lower Plenty Hotel
LIQUID ENGINEERS
19 Myrtleford Hotel
MENTAL AS ANYTHING
29 GEELONG
30 Pier Hotel
MODELS
22 Lady Bay Hotel
23 Ocean Grove Hotel
24 The Club
25 The Club
26 The Club
PARTY GIRLS
23 Paradise Room
PHOTOPLAY
18 Village Green Hotel
PSEUDO ECHO
24 Billboard
25 Ferntree Gully Hotel
26 Dorett Gardens
27 Lorne Pacific Hotel
RAYBEATS
29 Geelong
30 Pier Hotel
REDGUM
26 Myer Music Bowl
SOLE TWISTERS
18 Armadale Hotel
19 Terminus (Arvo)
19 Billboard (Night)
20 Creole Club (Arvo)
UNCANNY X—MEN
18 Ferntree Gully Hotel
19 Village Green Hotel
20 Pier Hotel
VENETTA'S TAXI
18 Benson's Hotel
19 Macy's

W.A.

BAMBOOS
24 Cottlesloe Hotel
27 Sherton Park
THE JOHNNYS
22 Wiz Bar
24 Cottlesloe Hotel
25 Canterbury Courts
26 Subiaco Hotel
27 Sherton Park

S.A.

BOSS
18 Findon Hotel
19 The Ranch
20 Pharoahs

QLD.

KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
18 Glen Hotel
19 Royal Mail Hotel
20 Jet Club
CALL BOYS
25 Homestead Hotel
26 Homestead Hotel
30 Strathpine Hotel
RICHARD CLAPTON
23 Mooloolaba Hotel
24 Bombay Rock
25 Jet Club
26 Mansfield Tav.
REDGUM
22 Surfair Hotel
25 Acacia Ridge Hotel

TAS.

BLUES BROS. REVIVAL BAND
18 City Limits
19 Nightmoves

the 1985 GIG GUIDE

Issue N°	Sale Date	Gigs Covered	Dead-line
252	16/1	18-31	10/1
253	30/1	1-14	24/1
254	13/2	15-28	7/2
255	27/2	1-14	21/2
256	13/3	15-28	7/3
257	27/3	29-11	21/3
258	10/4	12-25	4/11
259	24/4	26-9	18/4
260	8/5	10-23	2/5

NOTE.. DEADLINES ARE THURSDAYS

urban guerillas

"back! on the attack!"

PLUS..

NO IDEA

WED 16 MOSMAN HOTEL
SAT 19 FOREST LODGE HOTEL
MON 21 SANDRINGHAM HOTEL NEWTOWN
FRI 25 TAREN POINT HOTEL
SAT 26 FOREST LODGE HOTEL
MON 28 SANDRINGHAM HOTEL NEWTOWN
THU 31 VULCAN HOTEL ULTIMO

STRAWBERRY HILL HOTEL

453 ELIZABETH ST SURRY HILLS (02) 698 2997

16 LOVE RODEO
17 THE NEVER NEVER
18 TABLEWAITERS
19 SALAMANDER JIM
20 SKOLARS
21 ONE HORSE TOWN
22 HUNGRY YOUNG MEN
23 JAWBONE GREEN & HIPSLINGERS
24 CRYSTAL SET
25 THESE CARS COLLIDE
26 THE MOFFS
28 LUAU
29 POLES APART
30 X

VSPY VSPY

1st STEP BACK FROM SPACE TOUR

Wed Jan 23	Sweethearts	Sun Feb 17	Graphic Arts Club
Thu Jan 31	Tivoli	Wed Feb 20	Sweethearts
Wed Feb 6	Sweethearts	Sun Feb 24	Graphic Arts Club
Sun Feb 9	Graphic Arts Club	Wed Feb 27	Sweethearts
Wed Feb 13	Sweethearts	Sun Mar 3	Graphic Arts Club

THE HITMEN — Defiant In Defeat

Kamikaze Kannis (Pic: Greg Masuak)

I COME to praise the Hitmen, not to bury them — for after all is said and done, the Hitmen were an honourable band. Chris Masuak and John Kannis formed the first lineup in July of 1978, and have presided over the mixed fortunes of several more for six years.

As you are probably aware, the Hitmen came to a premature end in the winter of 1983, when Kannis was involved in a near fatal car accident and incapacitated for more than a year as a result. So it wasn't till late last year that the band did its final Sydney tour (titled *Tora Tora DTK*), recorded by 2JJJ-FM and released on vinyl by ABC Records.

I for one never understood why the Hitmen didn't find commercial success. Their singles, especially the debut, were simple, melodic and catchy, while their live performances were consistently impressive and occasionally flawless displays of high energy rock'n'roll. But the Hitmen were never a group with good fortune to burn — neither of their two record companies (WEA and RCA) ever knew quite what to do with them, and there was — certainly in the early days — a constant shifting of members, and the band found themselves the victims of some of the worst management advice imaginable.

"We were never ones to say the industry is destroying us," says Chris Masuak. "We never thought of quitting because there was so much opposition — we just didn't subscribe to that kind of thinking. The only thing that was able to break the band up was an almost fatal catastrophe.

"We always had a blind faith in ourselves, and in fact we had decided — prior to the Iggy Pop/Night Train sabbatical when John had his accident — that we were going to up and sell everything and go overseas. However those plans were rudely curtailed, and we just drifted off into other projects."

THE HITMEN'S greatest hindrance seems to have been the fact that they were the first band from the Punk/New Wave era who aimed to break out of the inner city and take their music to the general Australian public.

Masuak, Kannis and a number of the other early Hitmen (like Steve Harris and Ivor Hay) were legendary figures in Darlinghurst, but the promoters and the industry in general saw them as the enemy... *Countdown*, for example, showed only one of the band's singles; WEA spent very little on videos to promote three singles, and then dropped the band because they weren't shifting units! That's about when they moved to RCA to make a second record called *It Is What It Is*.

"With that album we were on the phone to Ron Asheton (of the Stooges) and he was going to come out and produce it," remembers Kannis. "We were talking air fares and money, and then our management told us that RCA insisted we do it with Dunlop and Brown. We really needed an album because it had been such a long time, and so we went in, did it and it was a big mistake."

If Masuak and Kannis have learned anything from their time in the Hitmen, it's how to control their careers. Kannis has moved into looking after the business side of groups like the Screaming Tribesmen, while Masuak has gone into production — notably, again for the Tribesmen whose last single *Igloo* was the No. 1 independent of 1983. In fact Chris has now joined the Tribesmen along with fellow Hitman, bass player Tony Robertson.

Though the Hitmen flirted with the sound of Heavy Metal, there was always an irrepressible energy pushing the band harder and faster and beyond the metal sludge — the rhythm section of Robertson and Kingsmill was always too supple and inventive to let the songs slide. And despite all the misfortunes, the band held their heads high and what was a pure pop sensibility became the sound of joyous defiance against the odds. That's the sound in the grooves of *Tora Tora DTK*, their posthumous live LP.

"After the accident, John said to me: 'This is no way to end a band'," says Masuak. "'We should say thanks to our live audience and the people who have supported us through the years.' Before and after those shows, Kannis was dragging himself around in pain. When he hits the stage it's OK, *fine*, and then after the show he'd collapse again. Quite seriously, half the time he was in hospital when the show was over. If he wasn't passed out backstage, he was in the fucking hospital!

"We were never commercially successful, but ultimately we ended up with what anyone wants — which is a bit of credibility. You can look someone in the face when they tell you they don't like your work, and you can say 'Who cares? It's good,' and you *know* it's good in your fucking heart."

Life goes on. The records live on, and so it is with *Tora Tora*. This is simply the Hitmen as they were, going out in a blaze of glory. There can be no epitaphs, because their spirit of survival supercedes the past.

TOBY CRESWELL

ARE YOU OLD ENOUGH • STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU • GET THAT JIVE •
APRIL SUN IN CUBA • KONKAROO • SUNSHINE • THIS TIME • SAME OLD BLUES •
SHOOTING STARS • WHAT AM I GONNA DO

PAUL HEWSON

1952 – 1985

YOU'LL BE MISSED

CBS SONGS AUSTRALIA

STRANGE TENANTS

Love Us, Love The Underdog

AAAAA

"We've never — either in interviews or in songs — shied away from what we believe in, but at the same time, we want to do it naturally. We don't want to do political albums or interviews for their own sake. If people want to ask us about the politics of the band, we tell them. When we write songs, we write them as we feel." **— Bruce Hearn**

"I feel guilty sometimes when I write a song that's just a love song, and I shouldn't, because it's one of the most important things in life. Some people who don't like politics come up and tell us that, but I think the times are so serious for the whole world that no-one can afford to ignore them. In Germany in the 1930s, musicians who did take a stand were thrown off balconies or into prison camps. I don't think those times are all that dissimilar to these. There's an old saying — 'If you're not part of the solution, then you're part of the problem'." **—Ian Hearn**

COMMITMENT is a big word in the vocabularies of Bruce and Ian Hearn, the two brothers behind the Strange Tenants. Ian sings, plays guitar, and writes most of the songs; Bruce sings, writes, and plays the trumpet.

Standing up for what you believe in has been a way of life in their household for generations. At one stage in the 1940s, their grandfather was secretly President of his local Communist and Labor party branches at the same time.

Having spent their lives in a politically active family in the inner city Melbourne suburb of Collingwood, the Hearn brothers are strong socialists and staunch supporters of the working class. On the way up in the elevator to their Sydney hotel room, Bruce tells me of the previous night's excitement — the saving of a woman from a mugger. The story has all the elements of a Starsky and Hutch plot, complete with the car chase and inevitable showdown ("Ian kicked him in the stomach"). Champions of the underdog!

The politics of the Hearns colour their songs, as well as their approach to the music business. With music becoming more escapist and lightweight as the recession grinds on, many bands so outspoken face the problem of categorisation and dismissal — the "just a bunch of trendy commie ranters" mentality. But political labelling and victimisation obviously don't bother the Hearns — Ian matter-of-factly recounts tales of harrassment at school, of ASIO agents and phone taps at home — they are more bemused than worried by it all.

BRUCE: "In the early 70s, the Chilean folk singer Victor Jara made a big contribution to the world. He was not only a folk singer, he was a popular figure. He sang about the people, and when the fascists took over in that country, they stopped him playing by simply smashing his wrists. They eventually killed him by bashing his head against a wall.

"We can't even compare ourselves and the efforts we're making, because obviously Australia doesn't have these conditions, so the comparison is hard. But if we suffer any victimisation, then it's nothing compared to that — so it doesn't affect us."

THE Strange Tenants have just released their debut album, *Movin' In*. After a six-month break to write and record it, they're currently back on tour to promote it. When they left the live circuit back in March last year, they lost keyboardist Laurence Maddy and saxophonist Dave Williamson, both of whom wanted to keep working. Laurence is now in No Nonsense, and Dave has resurfaced with Kids In The Kitchen. There are actually quite a few people who can call themselves ex-Tenants — some of whom have hinted that democracy within the band is not all it should be.

IAN: "We're different from most bands. We have an independent stance, though we're not desperate to sign with anyone. We could have got a contract, but we weren't satisfied with what was being offered. The other guys wanted us to get a contract; they weren't interested in the politics or in popularising ska. It was mainly a money thing."

BRUCE: "The core of the band has been basically stable — the four of us have always had a long-term approach. We haven't been after a hit single; we see ourselves as just hanging in there and slowly building up the band's base. You've got to be committed to more than just earning a wage."

IAN: "More than just counting the girls hanging around the back door!"

Phil Grove and Ralph Franke (formerly of Invisible Mendez) have since joined the band, completing what the Hearn brothers feel is the most confident and settled lineup yet. The long-term approach has also worked, and the band are now one of the most successful independent entities in the country.

Movin' In was recorded over thirty days at Richmond Recorders in Melbourne, with Goanna-producer Trevor Lucas and Tony Buettel. With a distribution deal through EMI, the record has been released on the Tenants' own label, Blue Beat.

BRUCE: "We're in debt virtually for the whole cost of the album — Ian and I have hocked ourselves to our family for thousands of dollars. We did get a small advance from EMI; they knew it would sell because of our last sales. We just made deals to pay things back slowly. We're lucky in the sense that we don't lose money on the road, so if worst comes to worst, we'll just have to tour constantly."

The album is a solid grounding for the future of the band, showcasing as it does the various styles of their songs — soul, r'n'b, funk, blues, and of course, ska and reggae. Breaking out of their usual acoustic feel, a Fairlight synthesiser has been used to create sound effects on some tracks, adding to their dynamism. Perhaps the best thing about *Movin' In* is that, unlike so many other debut albums, it is not a potted history of the band; almost all of the songs have been written in the last year. And when heavy topics are dealt with, it's done in a way that seeks to instill optimism and hope.

BRUCE: "We don't write songs that bash people over the head with a political viewpoint — that only alienates them. All you end up doing is preaching to the converted, so we try to present our lyrics and our songs in a way that all people can handle."

The future looks set for the Strange Tenants, and there are several projects in the planning stages. Due to pressing demand to make some of their earlier material more available, they're thinking of releasing a twelve-inch EP with a dual purpose — to raise funds for a worthy cause "like the NDP." If that idea gets off the ground, the EP will include *Ground Point Zero* and *Soldier Boy* from their first EP, and *Cannon Fodder*, the B-side of their next single — tipped at this stage to be *Shoulder To Shoulder*.

Another idea floating around the think tank is slightly more unusual. As most bands mature, their audience evolves accordingly; over the last couple of years, the Tenants' audience has been constantly shifting, and as a gesture of thanks to the original faithful, the band have a spcial project in mind.

IAN: "We're thinking of doing an album of all the ska songs we didn't record, maybe under the name of *'Blue Beat All-Stars Semi Live'*, or something like that: sort of a party album. There are a lot of people who were into the band just for those songs, and in the past, we never had the finances to do it."

BRUCE: "We don't want to live in the past, but in a sense we owe a debt to those people too. Without their support, the band wouldn't be where we are today. We'd like to give them something back, though we're hoping that they'll progress with us and get into our new music. The album wouldn't necessarily come out under the name Strange Tenants — we might even get a few guys from other bands to play with us and make it into *more* of a party album."

The immediate future sees one or two more months of touring. When that's over, they'll be able to sit back and review the situation — the biggest plan is to make a second Strange Tenants album before the end of the year, hopefully overseas. Feelers are already out for producers.

IAN: "We'd like to work with the guy who's just done the new UB40 album, Howard Gray. . . or maybe their engineer, Earl Falconer, who did the other albums. . . or maybe someone like Bob Sargeant, who worked with the Beat."

Hearing themselves talk about all these plans, Bruce and Ian seem to have only just realised exactly how much they have in front of them.

Ian laughs: "We'll probably have to put off the socialist revolution for a year or two!"

JON CASIMIR

SOLID CITIZENS

Sharp, Shiny & Saleable

INTRODUCING the Solid Citizens' Wake-Up-And-Take-Notice Promotional Kit. With every phone interview you get: a copy of the single, *Singing In The Shower;* a promo sheet that begins by referring to Orson Welles and ends with a tribute to "good ol' Aussie pub rock experience"; and a free (yes, FREE!) bottle of shampoo as used by the US National Swimming Team. Phew! Rock 'n' roll!

Now, forget about the implied insult of giving away personal hygiene products and let's try and establish what exactly is going on here. Glen Muirhead and Mick Walker — remnants of a Queensland-based band that didn't quite make it to Sydney — are flat out promoting their first single for RCA, recorded at Virgin's Manor Studios in Oxford under the guiding hands of Mark Oldenberg and Mike Shipley.

Fresh from work with the Pointer Sisters and the Cars (among other Names), the latter pair had very limited time available; so RCA cut corners by throwing our Solid Citizens on the plane for a total of twelve days in the studio. The result is a single so highly polished that you have to wear sunglasses when you're in the same room with it. State of the art techno-pop — all complicated drum programs and snappy synth pyrotechnics, with the song coming in a distant second.

I read the blurb. I listened to the single. I vaguely remembered seeing the video clip, which featured a bunch of goons getting their instruments wet in a shower. OK, I thought, I'm gonna have a go at these guys. All that money spent on whizzing around the world to Richard Branson's idea of Disneyland *and* the wanky production *and* the promo tour that brought them home via Europe and the States — all this for the ultimate in brainless, glitzy, *disposable* pop music. Half the bands in Sydney are splitting up because they can't afford to keep themselves in guitar strings!

"I don't know," says Mick. "The song is meant to be humorous. It all depends what you want to listen to. That song is just for entertainment. The lyrics aren't meant to be deep, though the musical content certainly isn't simplistic..."

Point taken. Not every three-minute pop song can be expected to clear up the global existential dilemma. Still, with such an *overwhelming* production, you can't help but wonder how much control the musicians actually had.

"Well, we were pretty blown out by it. I think it's definitely the best sound I've ever heard — I really like it, I like its *upness*. Actually, it was really a co-production — we just got on really well with Goldenberg and Shipley, and there was no bullshit at all."

Maybe it's true. Maybe Solid Citizens were just incredibly lucky enough to fall into the lap of a mega-corporation able to provide the muscle to realise their most expensive dreams. And yet Mick doesn't consider himself to be a pop musician. He's at pains to point out that his favourite lyricist is Lou Reed, whom he admires for his skill with words at once simple and darkly evocative. He's also taken aback when I tell him that the blurb makes Solid Citizens sound like a couple of really normal guys having fun, fun, fun — an Antipodean version of Wham!

"Oh really? Is that how you read it? Argh! I think that's the hype factor, you know."

But that's what happens when you're taken up and churned out as this year's product...

"Yeah, it does happen, sure. But I don't know what you can do about it. It's part of having saleable songs; it's trying to please everyone."

I wonder out loud whether Mick and Glen are musical chameleons, happy to pump out the sort of stuff that the company has deemed most likely to appeal. After all, if you can string together a decent hookline but aren't too worried about creative integrity, then big companies love you most of all.

"No. Not at all. In fact, we've got a song that's five years old that's probably still our strongest song, and it hasn't been changed at all. If anything, it's the *market* that's changed."

ALTHOUGH Mick denies that saleability is his primary motivation, he has no desire to return to the thankless task of slogging around the live circuit, trying to keep a band together as the debts mount up. At 32 he feels he's paid his dues, and the starving artist image holds no allure.

Having started this period of their career with the idea of getting a single out and seeing which way the wind blew, Solid Citizens are now in the position of planning the recording of the LP, going on *Countdown* live, and getting a band together for an Australian tour sometime this year. The company is apparently delighted with the material they have produced so far. It's hardly standard treatment for a new and essentially untested signing.

"It's not usual," agrees Mick. "I think it's a combination of a new A&R man at RCA and also Chris Gilbey, our publisher. They got together the promotion schedule in the States, which was really just putting a face to the product. As it happened, RCA Australia hadn't even received the tapes. We sent them, but they got delayed somehow."

He's very affable, this Mick Walker... not the sort of person you can pick a fight with over the telephone. Solid Citizens obviously feel they're getting a good deal, and on the face of it, it's hard to argue. As they say in the Biz, the company's right behind them. If they manage to string together the desired number of hits, then they can expect the royal treatment to continue.

On the other hand, if the market fails to respond they'll be dumped but still bound hand and foot by contracts and debts. And there's the rub. Play this particular game, and your musical credibility is measured only in terms of units shifted. But if you can't sustain it, then there's no use whimpering about your unfulfilled creative urge.

Finally, I just had to ask Mick what happened to the synths and guitars used in the video for *Singing In The Shower*. It looked so decadent somehow, all that expensive gear getting pissed on.

"Well, the gear was actually compliments of Roland. They did actually strip the insides, so what you saw was just the shells."

Well really, I couldn't have put it better myself.

WANDA JAMROZIK

NOT DROWNING, WAVING

The Profound & The Perverse

IN THE WAKE of their moderately successful first indie single *Moving Around,* neo-classical duo Not Drowning, Waving have taken the plunge with their atmospheric debut album, *Another Pond* (Rampant Releases). Initial interest sparked by their studio debut extended to public radio airwaves in both Melbourne and Sydney, and this impressive first full-length foray into self-production should build on that portentous beginning.

David Bridie, a softly-spoken young romantic, is a classically-trained pianist/composer whose work draws keenly on Melbourne's art traditions. Guitarist John Phillips, another earnest young man, moulds harmonic chord shapes, melodies and textures into Not Drowning, Waving's sea of sound. Punctuating the Roland synths and piano are xylophones, bells, congas, cello, drum machine, synthesised bird song, babbling brooks and 'found' radio talkback voices. Instrumentally awash as they are, these haunting compositions are illuminated by Bridie's lyrical irony and pensive vocals.

Recorded on eight-track between May and July '84, *Another Pond* displays several recent influences, vide: Jon Hassell, Brian Eno, Laurie Anderson and the propulsive dynamism of early Simple Minds. While they readily acknowledge these, it would be more accurate to say that Not Drowning, Waving are simply addressing a similar set of aesthetics and disciplines.

Rampant will be releasing the album in England through an independent, though this is admittedly a long shot for the duo. "It will definitely get a release, be that just on export from Australia, but what we're hoping to secure is a lease deal over there through an independent. If it is just released from here then there's really no guarantee or incentive for them to follow it up with promotion," says Bridie.

Do they aspire to the European pilgrimage? "We've got vague ideas, primarily because [illegible] is so unpredictable and there's no yardstick to gauge how Not Drowning, Waving's going to have an impact. I personally would like to go — not necessarily from just a musical viewpoint, because we can record in Australia and I'm happy to do so. Whereas just to go over there and have on the credits 'recorded in Berlin' or whatever doesn't mean all that much in the long run; I mean, we could starve just as well in Australia, although I'd like to see a climate develop here whereby more musicians can emerge who are concerned with similar issues and sensibilities."

Which raises the issue of 'profound' versus 'perverse' in the ongoing contemporary musical debate. At loggerheads with the prevailing swamp of mutant rockabilly revisionism, Not Drowning, Waving artfully cross the parameters of puerile pop.

John Phillips comments: "What you were saying before about the 'dirge' bands, I don't really see us as being in competition with them. Those bands are getting more and more compacted into the purely live spectacle, and further away from any hope of being recorded." The result is often an uncritical acceptance of form over content and a rigid denial of anything not recognisably allied to that cliched thing called 'rock'.

GIVEN that Not Drowning, Waving are not a live act, how do they assess their vinyl audience? "That's one of the difficulties, because we haven't played live. Obviously we don't see our audience, we don't know who bought the single. I do think however that people will be receptive to it (*Another Pond*) if they hear it. Obviously certain people won't be," Bridie acknowledges.

Parallel to their studio project as Not Drowning, Waving, Bridie and Phillips perform live with new Melbourne art-funksters, 'Easter', who are reminiscent of early Talking Heads. As well as taped monologues from radio and television broadcasts, a 'typical' Easter show makes equally colourful use of projected slides.

"Easter is a collaborative effort which is geared towards performance," elaborates Bridie. "It's still at that evolving stage where we find that we're going through the struggles that Not Drowning, Waving were having eight months ago... you've got to struggle to get people to review or publicise your gigs. We've had good responses from our audiences, and the demo went down very well at Triple R. Hot records in Sydney really liked it and are going to issue it on a future compilation of theirs."

Guesting on *Another Pond* are cellist Tanya Hardy-Smith and Easter bassist Rowan McKinnon. The chore of mixing was shouldered by Tim Cole, the vocalist from Easter who aided the duo in their production.

John Phillips recalls: "It teaches you a great deal when you have to work within those confines. In terms of actual monies it was pretty inexpensive, and in terms of actual stress, very taxing. It was a good learning experience, not having anyone to lean on the whole way through."

Richard Girven (who produced *Moving Around*) was also roped in to assist in the production. "Although we have limited resources in that we can't afford to book out AAV for five weeks, what we can do is entirely on our own terms," says Bridie. As an example, parts of his piano tracks were recorded on a Steinway grand at a mansion in Canterbury, utilising the given acoustics of the room.

Predominant themes of ecological destruction, corporate greed, political complacency and the nuclear arms debate are dealt with intelligently on *Another Pond*. One song is aptly titled *John Wayne Visits Port Augusta*, and records the desperate fight of fringe-dwelling Aborigines against big business. It is both ironic and bewildering that the recently contacted Pintubi nomads' first dose of white music had to be a culture shock of seismic proportions, ie Midnight Oil!

Presently, Bridie and Phillips are putting the finishing touches to their first video, shot at the primordial Wilson's Promontory (the southern-most extremity of the Australian continent) for an album outtake: *I Dare Not Say A Word*. The actual single to be lifted from the album is *Hunting For Nuggets* b/w *Perfect Design* and *Away*.

BRIDIE: "After the album's out, we can begin work on a second album whenever we decide. We've got feelers in the area of film music, and there's a couple of promising projects in the air."

BRECON WALSH

(Pic: Brecon Walsh)

REVOLUTION and the COMMITTEE OF LOVE

AVOCADOS,

(Pic: Nicky Baruch)

"Right now I've got this image in my head of the whole Sydney music scene being like a huge, ripe avocado waiting to be sliced open". **— Dave Studdert**

TACTICS are back, extolling Positive Power and Species Consciousness. MARK MORDUE scores a ticket to the Inner Sanctum.

I REMEMBER summers in Newcastle at my grandmother's house, the heat stultifying the air till you could hardly breath. That atmosphere of oppression, the climate of inertia. Looking for the faintest whisper of a breeze I would lay down on the floor, where a draught might touch the skin and ease the spirit with a hint of possible release.

That feeling of release would arrive sometimes, when the southerly winds changed the smell of the air with a storm tumbling in off the ocean. I would open the front and back doors of the house and lie waiting as the building buster blew the stale air away and the rain would finally hurtle down.

Seems like my last few years in Sydney have been like one long hot summer of the spirit, looking for something that would move, lying close to the ground. And now it's arriving...

TACTICS (THE BAND) are back in action, raising inspiration from me and more than a little life. Best to let you know I'm just one of the early telegraphs wired to their electricity, sending out the message that new entertainment blood is PUMPING. At the heart of this story is my commitment to put all I've got behind them: believing enough to say "I'll do whatever I can". It's a story about making friends, moving moments, meaning to win, making something really happen. Saying, "Hey, have you seen..."

Tactics. Once the darlings of the inner city and contenders for bigger accolades, they fell apart utterly in late '82 after the classic *My Houdini* and *Glebe* albums. As songwriter, guitarist and vocalist Dave Studdert puts it, "By the time it accelerated, we were fucked. That was it. We'd been carrying it on to get to that point, basically on our own backs entirely, and when we got it there it required just as much energy, just as much intensity for the next six months. And we just didn't have it in us.

"The gigs became very, very anarchic, and on the whole depended on me making a spectacle of myself more than the music. It just petered out — we didn't ever wake up one morning and go, 'This is fucking awful, let's quit!'. At that stage I was happy to be rid of the whole thing...it had been this big brick wall in front of me for about the last year and a half that I couldn't get around. I felt I wasn't absorbing very much in the way of new ideas, things like that."

As Clinton Walker succinctly put it, "Tactics were assured of underground immortality, but this was not to be 'success'." And sure enough, a hipper-than-thou notch on the post next to marks made by the likes of the Birthday Party, the Laughing Clowns and other low-light, low-life legends was not enough. There was still an unfinished story.

Tactics had up and consumed themselves, a greater vision disintegrating in confused intensities. But main-movers Studdert and guitarist Angus Douglas bided time for the ignition from the ashes. Studdert in Armidale, studying at Uni and working on a novel called *The Long Paddock,* and Angus back in Sydney, circling the city and eventually sharing a house with myself and seven others, sleeping till midday, talking of Russia and anarchism.

Our Newtown abode became a focal point of sorts as Angus, Dave and keyboardist Nicky Baruch practised in the downstairs basement with various people, pushing the results through to the kitchen and up into my bedroom. How could I *not* take an interest?

When Snajik (pronounced 'snake') moved in with his bass during the dying days of his band, Robots in Sunshine Park, things fell together quickly. Angus finally roped in the Same's rather mind-blowingly powerful drummer, Tony Donohoe, and Tactics really *were* back in action. With the kind of rhythm section they'd dreamed of but never had in the past, it was good cause for Dave's "It's the best fucking band I've been in" enthusiasm.

At a time when the underground scene has been hungering for a new force, a new presence, Tactics have surfaced shaking with energy. And while people say revolution is no longer possible, in life or music, there's a spirit of change in Tactics' music like you've rarely ever felt before. An idiosyncratic twist of conventions rearranged and adventure reasserted: splitting up the heat, smashing down the walls, this Tactics wind is coming to the world.

SO WHAT is the Tactics sound? Where do they come from? What can I say about the intriguing and the passionate, the romantic and the political, that doesn't leave me awash in cliches, trying to hook you with blatant praise instead of promising mystery? AS a band, their influences and music stutter excitedly: reggae, Love and other psychedelic sixties sounds, the Centrepoint tower, cracked humour, Bob Dylan and the folk spirit, Russia, pamphlets, the union movement, anarchism, suburban anguish and optimism, Bondi and the Velvets. All this and Dave's strangled, stretched mockery-of-a-crow's voice, and Angus's fast, spindly lines of shooting guitar make them a rock'n'roll band like one you've never heard before. The familiar taking flight. The sound of the sound.

DAVE: "Some guy was yelling out at us yesterday, 'Energy! Energy!' He was a real KB country sort of guy."

NICKY: "But that *is* what the band gives the people. I know, 'cause I was like the original fan, and you really do get that energy from seeing Tactics when they're good."

I always think it's important to make music something that can inspire people to release themselves, and be some sort of catalyst to other action as well.

DAVE: "Yeah... it's not enough in itself, but when it's joined up with something else worthwhile it becomes really good. People invariably don't change easily, especially the major changes in people's outlook that we're looking for. They don't happen because somebody tells them what to do, and in a lot of ways it shouldn't happen like that. It happens because people get an idea in their heads, and over a period of time a number of ideas from lots of different sources gel, and maybe something triggers it off.

"So what we want to do is present something that's really strong and independent in itself. That is, five people who are individuals, who also have strength as a unity. I don't like the way in which there's strong individuals but the whole notion of people as a social grouping is disappearing in modern Western societies, along with the whole notion of people having obligations to other people as well. Just the whole species consciousness idea.

"If you like, what we're trying to do is present our version of that. And do it in a way that involves people physically, but which also requires thinking about as well. The mind and the body should not be separated, and never are, at a Tactics gig."

In the musical context, a lot of people are expressing alienation to the point where people are reproducing the image of alienation and causing further oppression.

DAVE: "The classical artists always believed you should show the best and not the worst of people. Why dwell on those aspects? — it's just ridiculous. And so we never do that. We may dwell on the dark and sardonic, but only so we can laugh at it.

"To a really large extent, we would like to be faceless in a way that personality bands would be far too scared to be. None of us want to have heaps of stories told about how we were crawling up the gutter."

ANGUS: "I've got no choice" (*laughter*).

DAVE: "Yeah, well we do actually crawl up gutters, but only in sidestreets and late at night. We just don't want to be world famous for it."

Strange where people like the Birthday Party drift into that grey area between making great music and adding to the mythology of heroin...

ANGUS: "Yeah. There's no need to make a big deal out of it. We've always striven to pay attention to that which really matters and not mislead people up dead-end alleys."

DAVE: "Nihilism. Drugs."

Well, everybody indulges in drugs of some form or another, socially acceptable or not, but you don't have to make those indulgences a recommendation.

DAVE: "Or make it the be-all, and end-all, of what you're doing."

NICKY: "You've gotta keep it in perspective."

ANGUS: "There's a lot of values in a human being. That was one thing I didn't like about the Birthday Party — I've got this one record and it's got all these symbols on the front, like coffins in the shapes of crosses, hangman's nooses, swastikas, blah blah..."

DAVE: "We *all* know we're going to die."

NICKY: "It's a real glorification of nihilism! Just bullshit."

ANGUS: "We all know that evil, or whatever you want to call it, exists. But there's no point making a cult of it."

NICKY: "Or courting it."

DAVE: "And the problem is a lot of people who think like that aren't intelligent enough to realise there's more than two alternatives. There's not just this straight society versus bent society. Or that to be extreme you simply have to be the reverse of what the reality is. There's any number of alternatives, and people ought to find out the one they want in terms of behaviour they find worthy in themselves. Rather than automatically assuming they've got to glorify death because this society appears to glorify the worst form of life."

ANGUS: "That's why we're not interested in the cult of evil, because you haven't made the necessary intellectual step from the nihilistic 'evil is all-powerful and is going to crush everything' attitude, when you've got all these other things that exist which are just as strong."

DAVE: "If you think like that, then you just haven't got very much life beating in your veins. And you can see it."

I think it's like a situation where you've lost...

DAVE: "Or you never had it."

ANGUS: "Central tenet of Maoist philosophy — never admit defeat, no matter how small or weak your force is. Because as soon as you admit defeat, you're crushed. As long as you don't, there's still hope or a chance. That's how the Vietnamese people kicked out the most powerful army that ever existed on earth. This to me eclipses evil, and *is* a much more powerful thing."

DAVE: "It's very easy to be evil in this society."

NICKY: "And we acknowledge that darker side, but we're a positive band."

DAVE: "We're an ancient world band. Like the Greeks. They were a people who had a really strong life force and a really positive attitude, but they lived a lot closer to death than a lot of people in this society do now. A lot closer to death than all these people in Surry Hills and Newtown who go out and *buy* it — the decaying sons and daughters of the rich."

AS INTEREST from overseas independents rumbles around Tactics and talk of an album floats into view, the band are gearing up more immediately for the release on Method Records of their first new single, *Fatman,* with an accompanying video. It's about the collapse of Western society, a bad dream bursting. And the rise of a new force in the belly of the beast.

Angus leans forward. "The fascinating thing about capitalism is that you can make a market out of anything. Even *anti*-capitalism."

It's a thought we've discussed before, an irony we're ready to explode through. Outside, the night is hot and still. Ten thousand hands are joining.

So what's your great dream for the band?

ANGUS: "A big rubber balloon comes down to earth from out of the sky and we all get into the basket and go floating up high, with the rest of the world hanging on a rope getting taken behind us on a big trip."

DAVE: "That'll do."

NICKY: "Or we're playing one night and The Big One comes up from underneath the stage."

ANGUS: "Yeah! For The Big One to finally appear."

(Tentatively) *Who's... 'The Big One'*? (Uproarious laughter)

ANGUS: "You know, Mark. The big lotto ball on the TV!"

SOME TIME ago, Dave invited me over to his house in the late afternoon to discuss Tactics tactics. We sat with big plans and big promises, with a big red sun on the horizon, eating avocado on toast. Now I trail this story like a piece of rope behind me...

The Lime Spiders

More Of Their Own Medicine!

MEDICINE and the kind of art that focuses on the physical, the sensual and the painful have had a long and fruitful association.

Louis-Ferdinand Celine who authored that beautiful and poisonous catalogue of evil, *Journey To The End Of The Night*, was a doctor whose initial motivation came from his work with soldiers who had been hideously injured in battle.

George Miller, creator of the *Mad Max* series, has gone on record as stating that he was initially impelled to create his futuristic scenario of violence when he was working as a doctor, stitching up car crash victims in the casualty section of a large hospital. He simply reunited the charred skin and shattered bones in front of him with the twisted and jagged metal machines that had made them that way.

Radio Birdman songwriter Deniz Tek, another doctor, has made no such overt claims about his own work — but some of his more physically lucid imagery seems inspired by medical practice, e.g. *'Burn my eye!'*

LIME SPIDERS' singer/songwriter and only remaining original member Mick Blood happens to be a nurse. *Nurse Blood*. Imagine that! I'm sure it's a title that's scared off more than one patient. Within the course of his work, he's seen and heard some pretty horrific things. These often seem to resurface in the sound of his band.

Listen to their first single, a double seven-inch set which featured a cover of legendary sixties band the Haunted's *1-2-5*. Check the way Blood screams *'You're driving me insane! You're driving me insane!'* over and over again on the Spiders' own song, *25th Hour*. Hear the moans of pain and shrieks of hysteria that issue forth from their new single, the self-composed *Slave Girl*. These noises came direct from the emergency wards and rubber rooms where Blood has spent much of the last few years.

Slave Girl is a hilarious ode to the dubious joys of bondage. Chains clank menacingly in the background while the singer wails about one who's tied *'to my ankle like a ball and chain'*, and cackles like a spook in the ghost train.

The Lime Spiders were first formed some four years ago out in Sydney's western suburbs by Blood and original guitarist Darryl Mather. They were dedicated to the premise that the best music of all time was made by sixties garage punk bands like the Sonics, the Standells, the Chocolate Watchband and the type of psychedelic unknowns collected on compilations like *Pebbles* and *Nuggets*. They had no ambitions beyond playing that type of music at a couple of parties and getting as drunk as possible.

"It's true. We were really doing it just for fun at the beginning. We didn't have any kind of plans at all."

Blood is sitting in the beer garden of a small inner-city hotel with the Spiders' drummer Richard Lawson. Aside from a certain intensity, his quiet and soft-spoken manner belies the ferocious wild man persona which takes over on stage.

"After a while though, I looked around and saw how weak most of the other bands were and I realised that we really had something, we could *do* something. Why not?"

Why not indeed? Actually, since their formation the Lime Spiders have spent more time off the road than on. Members have come and gone at a prodigious rate. Mather is now long departed, and the other longest serving member, guitarist Richard Jakimyszyn, didn't join until at least six months after the band had formed.

I saw them at the time, at a New Year's Eve party at the now defunct Entertainers' Club at Redfern — a gig which also featured the Sunnyboys and the first appearance by the current lineup of the Scientists. Although I remember thinking their enthusiasm far outweighed their skills, I was amazed when someone told me they were just a bunch of teenaged yobs from the western suburbs. 'They should be listening to Foreigner and the Angels!' I replied in disbelief, 'not the Sonics and the Standells.'

They split up about a month later.

Their next move shows the strength and single-mindedness of Blood's sense of purpose...

"The Southern Cross (now the Strawberry Hill Hotel) was having a band competition, and the first prize was free studio time to record a single that would be released on Green Records. I *knew* we could win, so we got together again and entered."

Well? Whaddaya think happened? Yeah, just like a fairy tale, they won the thing hands down! And so the Spiders entered the studio augmented by a couple of former Birdmen — Warwick Gilbert on bass and Rob Younger on production — as well as cool piano player Bruce Tatham, now with Decline Of The Reptiles.

The ensuing product was a double seven-inch set which combined two originals — *Can't Wait Long* and *25th Hour* — with two of their favourite covers, the aforementioned *1-2-5* and *That's How It Will Be*, by the Liberty Bell. This record has gone on to become one of the highest selling independents of the last couple of years (over 2,000 copies), second only to the Scientists' *Happy Hour*.

Since then, there have been more break-ups and reformations. Finally however, the Lime Spiders seem to have arrived at some stability.

"Before, I was doing my training (to be a nurse), and I had to work a lot of weird hours and study a lot and that meant there were long periods of time when I couldn't play. But now I've finished all that, so I can devote a hell of a lot more time to the band."

THERE is a new strength and solidarity in the current lineup. Blood and Jakimyszin have been joined by drummer Richard Lawson, bassist Tony Bambach and (since the recording of *Slave Girl*) rhythm guitarist Gerrard Corben. Ironically, they're all former members of the Most, one of the opposing bands in the Southern Cross competition.

Unlike most of their contemporaries, the Lime Spiders do not plan to limit themselves to inner-city culthood. After a strong reaction to the first single internationally, almost a thousand copies of *Slave Girl* were snapped up by overseas distributors before it was even released. In the next two or three months, Big Time Records will release a six-track mini-album — a compilation of the first two singles — in the USA, the spiritual home of the Lime Spiders' sixties punk sound.

Most amazing of all though, *Slave Girl* an independent rock'n'roll record, has entered the mainstream charts. I can't remember the last time this happened, but sure enough — there it was in the prestigious Kent Report at No. 93.

The Spiders naturally enough are unperturbed by all the excitement. They feel it's only their due.

"When you look around at the kind of music kids get from the radio and television these days, you can see it's mostly rubbish."

Yet, I counter, the Spiders aren't exactly original. Most of their set consists of sixties covers that seem to have been copped wholesale from their record collections.

"Well, that kind of music is better than most of the stuff that's around these days. Anyway, we're starting to put more and more of our own songs in the set. Anyway, we're not copying that kind of music. We're playing it our own way, updating it."

Sure, but what the Spiders call 'updating' seems to consist merely of playing the songs louder and faster than the originals. Sometimes they even approach a quasi-heavy metal rifferama.

"We might be loud and fast, sure, but we're not heavy metal," contends drummer Lawson. "We listen to all kinds of music. You wouldn't believe the variety of music that the people in this band listen to. It all finds its way into what we do."

"Besides," adds Blood, "we're not like those bands like Iron Maiden. *They're* heavy metal, not us!"

What are you then?

"We're a rock'n'roll band!"

FRANK BRUNETTI

OIL'S
ON THE
WATER
MIDNIGHT
OIL
STEREO
SIMULCAST
NATIONAL
ABC·FM & TV
92.9 FM
JJJ
105·7 FM
SATURDAY
NITE 10.25 PM
ADELAIDE + N.T. 9.55 PM

"If you can't hack the pace, you shouldn't be here..."

A wondrous night at Melbourne's sumptuous Seaview Ballroom, as endured by LINDY PERCIVAL

SATURDAY night in Melbourne. The what's on pages are looking characteristically bleak. Besides, I've been meaning to tackle the last leg of War And Peace for ages now. But on Saturday night? Forget it! Nobody stays home on Saturday night! Hmmm. . . another quick scan. . . "Hunters and Collectors. Seaview Hotel." Seaview Hotel! Well, maybe I shouldn't leave Tolstoy waiting. Last time I left that place, I swore it was for good. But with a will that's as soggy as a Seaview sandwich, I'm already searching my wardrobe for my blackest ensemble. Bidding Tolstoy a fond farewell, I plunge into the night and resurface a little while later in Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda.

Feigning intrepidity, I dodge between a gang of mohicans sprawled across the steps of the Seaview. Just when I think I've made it, one of them lets out a piercing scream and I quickly check my shoes for the remains of his squelched fingers. They're clean. Phew! As I glance back, I see that the victim of his wrath is an old lady who's wandering past. She looks up in evident confusion as he screams at her. "Fucking old tourist!" Clutching her heavy shopping bags, she hurries off pursued by their taunting laughter.

Safe inside, I'm comforted by the grace of the familiar marble staircase and drooping palms. But walking across the beer-logged purple geometric carpet towards the Paradise Lounge, I'm reminded that this is Fitzroy Street, after all. In the gloom of the murky red light, black-clad figures gaze unblinkingly at an empty stage. Faces pale. Eyes ringed with black. Hair hanging in tangled strips. You could be forgiven for thinking you'd stumbled across the consumptives' ball. Occasionally, an emaciated young theng darts off to the ladies' to re-tease drooping locks or add another inch to an already dense mask of make-up.

Back in the foyer, Johnny Rotten's lip curls from the video screen. The few people watching return the sneer with affected hostility, or else look nonchalant. Johnny screeches — 'God save the queen/The fascist regime/Has made you a moron/Potential H-bomb' — but nobody seems to care. Everybody's busy getting drunk, and even the few diehard punks scattered among the audience barely get excited. They all know that the Sex Pistols weren't about to change the world after all. And it's hard to stay angry when even that snarling, green-teethed "anti-Christ" has hung up his torn Jubilee T-shirts to make way for the new tailored look.

Oh well, you can't say he's the only one. When Johnny's done screaming, the latest Cure clip comes on — featuring the pouting, berouged and lipstuck Robert Smith. I remember the band's first Australian tour, when four skinny lads dressed in T-shirts and jeans graced the upstairs stage at the Seaview. I'd never been there before. A foyer packed with Dr. Frankenfurter lookalikes, a staircase strewn with writhing bodies, a few of them getting into the ultimate writhe. Tripping over a copulating couple and asking myself "what's a nice girl like you. . . ", I pushed my way into the anonymity of the crowd.

I waited there a long time. There was no room to move. And sneering faces have always made me nervous. But I waited. This is all gonna be worth it, I told myself. Truth is, I never did find out. See, the Cure were moving. The crowd was moving. And so was the floor. A good two feet, I estimated in my panic. Those large black amplifiers tottering over the heads of the audience just had to be an omen. Sure, the Cure were good. But not that good.

So I ran. Well, pushed really. Heading for the glimpse of light guiding me towards the exit, I encountered an unyielding obstacle. This guy didn't want to be pushed out of the way. "If you can't hack the pace, you shouldn't be here." His helpful advice. Certainly, friend. Couldn't agree with you more. With the aid of a pair of pathetically pleading eyes, I made good my escape, swearing that never again. . .

THAT familiar cry! I've uttered it often in the four years since. Like I said, a will that's as soggy as a Seaview sandwich. Speaking of which. . . A regular patron, I now feel hardly a quiver approaching a sanger stand which is regarded with supreme suspicion by all but the initiated. It is here that the poor and hungry punk can gorge to his heart's delight on spam-of-dubious-origins-slapped-between-bread-and-tastefully-nestled-in-a-bed-of-withered-lettuce. The sandwich maker is a middle-aged man who only occasionally stares in dismay at the speed with which the fruits of his efforts disappear.

He smiles across at the barman, who hasn't found a hairstyle to suit him better since the Rockers' era. He's looking equally horrified at what he's finding at the bottom of discarded beer glasses. He darts among the crowd of people watching Scrap Museum do a poor imitation of the Birthday Party. Drummer Phil Calvert has brought something along from his time with Nick Cave, but it's either too much or not enough.

As on most nights when the main band fails to fit a category, the gang's all here. The inveterate mohican stalks through the crowd, clutching his bottle of apple cider. He passes a disco dolly, who points and whispers in the ear of her denim-clad friend. They giggle behind their bejewelled fingers. Behind them, a young girl whose hair is stiff with superglue surmises that Casablanca's disco must have closed early tonight.

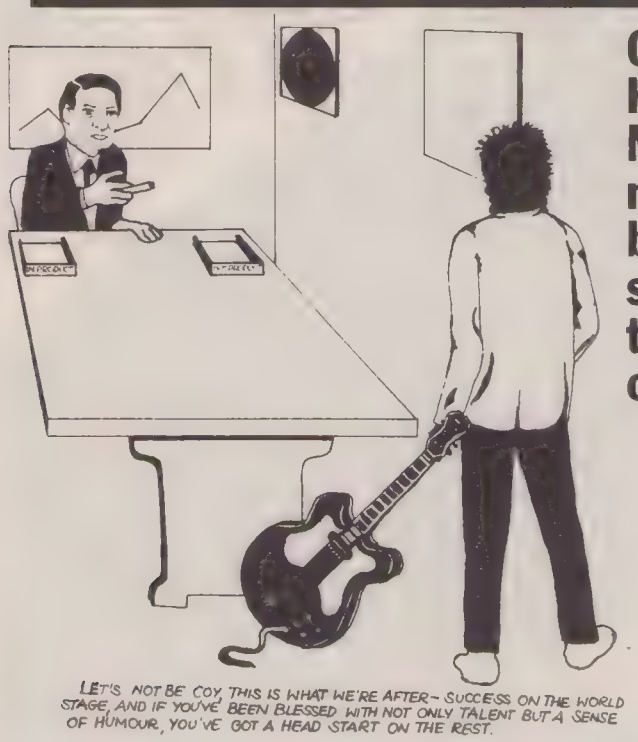
Having had enough of the guttural groans of the poor man's Nick Cave, I decided to wander upstairs to wait for Hunters And Collectors. The crowd is thickening with people just waiting to be given a good time. After a while the band arrives, and Mark Seymour does his best to whip up a storm. A few in the audience respond, but the floor looks like keeping still tonight.

The chubby chap in front of me, unconsciously discovering the joys of sadism, decides it's more fun to boogie on someone else's feet. Mine. By the end of the night, the band are sweating, the crowd are jumping, and my feet are deciding that maybe Tolstoy wasn't such a bad idea after all. I'm deciding that maybe you're right, guys.

Escorting my tortured toes home along Fitzroy Street, I promise them that never again. . . But they know as well as I do. I've said that before.

(Illustration: James Molloy)

MUSIC PUBLISHING
— Turn On The Lights!



LET'S NOT BE COY, THIS IS WHAT WE'RE AFTER~ SUCCESS ON THE WORLD STAGE, AND IF YOU'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH NOT ONLY TALENT BUT A SENSE OF HUMOUR, YOU'VE GOT A HEAD START ON THE REST.

One-time prolific RAM contributor JENNY HUNTER-BROWN, now Professional Manager of MCA Music, explains the machinations of song publishing from both sides of the desk. As a successful songwriter in her own right, she's more than qualified to lead any aspiring composer out of the mystical maze. . .

LITTLE did I comprehend, bounding confidently into the Darlinghurst offices of MCA Music for my first day's work as Professional Manager, the extent of the voracious appetite for aid and information existing in the Australian music industry.

I had beaten roughly 30 applicants — including a lawyer — for my first salaried job. Since answering an ad for freelance writers in *Planet* magazine at the impressionable age of 19, I'd had 13 years' experience in the music business.

This had never been a conscious professional choice — I'd just stayed addicted to the myriad forms of rock, soul, blues and pop, and, being a writer, I'd written *about* it. . . and then, it seemed inevitably, begun writing the words and music of songs of my own. I'd written or co-written material performed and/or recorded by Dragon, Renee Geyer, Skyhooks, the Takeaways (*Hip Romeo*), Jimmy And The Boys, Marc Hunter and the Pink Flamingoes.

I'd also produced two books and innumerable articles for publications ranging from *The Digger* to *RAM* to *The Sunday Telegraph*. I'd run the day-to-day affairs of four independent music publishers, working with writers including Greg Macainsh, Red Symons, Captain Matchbox, Martin Armiger, Todd Hunter and other members of Dragon,

WRITING WITH PICTURES

Fancy yourself as the architect of Celluloid Dreams? ADELE BARNETT ponders writing for the screen as a viable career alternative. . .

SCREENWRITING can be such a *lure*. . . the enticement of seeing your creation, the story *you* have written transmogrified into a celluloid dream seen by many thousands.

The desire of generating a fantasy into an exciting production involving hundreds of people along the way in sporadic employment is a turn-on that leads many people to dump tons of paper on producers' desks annually. Most of that paper will be recycled, probably returning to the writers in the form of toilet rolls. Lawyers and accountants invest in films, but it seems that everyone who is not an actor trying to break into films wants to *write* one.

How, then, are you going to get through? How are you going to convince some known Producer that your script is the one they're looking for — the one which will incite investors to pour their ill-gotten gains into its production, that will have people paying money to see the end result and talk about it afterwards?

The good news is that most producers are looking for scripts. . . constantly. They usually read one a day.

The bad news is that they never find what they're looking for. At least, not on their desk.

As one producer said to me: "I've seen so many, I can tell just by *feeling* it what it will be like. First, I pick it up and hold it in my hand. I can tell by the weight if it's more than 130 pages (too long) or less than 90 (too short). If it's too long or too short, it's got structural problems."

Next, he flicks through the pages to check out the length of monologues. If they're too long, that means *more* structural problems. He will then read through the first few pages and if that fails to excite him, your work of screen art is transformed into trash.

Cold, hard facts for a cold, hard business. Never forget that it *is* a business, first and last. A business involving many necks on the line.

RECENTLY, I attended a Screenwriters' weekend at Katoomba, organised (very well) by the Australian Writers' Guild. Around 200 writers participated in the seminar. Half of them were interested onlookers — would-be screenwriters. The other half were involved in some area of film and television writing or producing. A few of those were very seasoned writers and producers, as were the guest speakers. What was said there helped to consolidate what I had gathered over the past couple of years.

So against my own reasonable advice, I will now attempt to elucidate some general-concensus information for your delectation and confusion.

"I can't tell you how I do it," experienced writers say. "I don't know."

It is agreed, however, that there are some basic rules of learning the craft before arriving at the point of 'not-knowing', so let's be basic. . .

What is a Screenplay? Purely and simply, it is a blueprint for a story told by pictures. The standard length of a feature film is 90-120 minutes, which means your script will be 90-120 pages. Each page (correctly laid out to format) represents one minute of screen time, whether dialogue or action/narrative.

Many screenwriters work to the structure of the *paradigm*, which means that you divide the screenplay into three acts. If you take, say, the 120-minute feauture, the three acts will consist (roughly) of a 30/60/30-minute breakup. (In Europe, features are generally 40/40/40.) A 30/60/30 breakup comes down to: Act one — the beginning; Page 1 to 30. Act two — the conflict or confrontation; Page 30 to 90. Act three — the resolution; 90 to 120.

Another definition of a screenplay is simply this: a person in a place doing something. Person is *character,* and thing is *action* or *plot*. This is important to remember, because you must know who the movie is about and what happens to her/him.

Example: "*Bonnie And Clyde* is about a gang of bankrobbers in the American Midwest of the 1920s who eventually meet their downfall."

This one sentence introduces the locale, time, setting, characters and action. You must be able to isolate your generalised idea into a specific, dramatic premise. It is the cornerstone of your screenplay to be able to articulate your subject in no more than two lines.

Producers at the Screenwriters' seminar all recounted instances of buying a screenplay (as yet unwritten) on the premise of such an idea succinctly delivered over the phone. But to have the essence of your screenplay, you must already know your characters and structure well — *and* have done enough research to build them both to the point of generalisation.

So we come to the leading elements: *Structure* and *Characterisation*. This is a chicken-or-the-egg story. No-one seems to know which comes first, but there is room for lengthy discussion on the subject.

For no reason, we'll take *Characterisation* first. Characters only come with extensive bio-work — you could start with their birthdates, because that gives you the time-setting. What was happening that you want to involve them in or provide as a background of influence for them? You must know *who* the characters are, because that will provide the action — either physical or emotional — you are to involve them in. Their interior forms the character, while the exterior reveals it — define the need, and you'll get action. The character's action encompasses their work, personal life, relationships, hobbies, the people they live with, etc.

Characters interact in three ways:
(1) the conflict in achieving their dramatic end or need;
(2) interaction with other characters;
(3) interaction with themselves. . . fun, apprehension, fear, etc.

Often lacking in novice writers is a capacity for dramatic tension — conflict to obstacles of the need. A person is now what he/she *says* — but what he/she *does*. Let's see what they really do. . . People who sit around talking are not doers, so show the anarchist blowing up Parliament House, not just having meetings.

Seasoned Screenwriter Tony Morphett says: "It may be impossible to describe all the elements that make up a human character. It's not only complex, but improbable. Real life is improbable. If the history of the Third Reich had not actually happened, it would be regarded as the most obscene story that anyone could invent. You always have to reduce the character beyond reality, because often, real life is not real."

Television writer Keith Thompson has some interesting views on characters: "Characterisation is less about personality and more about structure and event. Shakespeare's neutrality for his characters makes us care for them. There are no heroes and villains, really. Each has an excuse for their crimes. We should make sure that the audience understands the characters — we like to watch the characters doing their best with the flaws they possess."

According to *Picnic At Hanging Rock* writer Cliff Green, "We have love affairs with our characters in the most non-platonic way you could imagine."

"On my deathbed," muses Keith Thompson, "how many of my characters would I want hovering around? I keep imagining the cast of *Cop Shop* muttering 'Where's the Forensic Report?'"

They say it's not a bad idea to cast your characters while writing, even if those actors never get the part. The actor makes the role their own on screen and their portrayal becomes the definitive role, because usually it's a one-off. It is somewhat amusing to note that a casting suggestion for Humphrey Bogart's role in *Casablanca* was Ronald Reagan!

Perhaps the final word on characterisation comes from the audience. . .

"Is there a movie where character does *not* come first?"

"Yes," answers Bob Ellis. "*Razorback.*"

RIGHT. Now that we know bugger-all about *Characterisation,* let us move blithely onto *Structure*.

Structure is a linear progression of related incidents, episodes and events, leading to a dramatic resolution. It is also a direction, a line with an arrow, a strong forward-movement. It must push onto the conclusion. Extraneous scenes are OUT, because you'll lose the audience.

Question: What are the biggest traps in Structure? Peter Schreck, writer of *Coolangatta Gold* gives the answer. "The biggest trap is having a good beginning, a good middle and a bad ending. . . failing to have a big payoff ending."

Don Walker, and of course, myself.

My first experience in publishing came at 25, when Beverly Patterson — besieged by the demand for her and Megan Tudor's publicity business, *Propaganda* — handed over the reins of the company's publishing arm to me; and so I started the long process of absorption of information which continues throughout a publisher's career.

Much is never put to the final test — the courts — and the legal interpretation of contract clauses is in a constant state of flux. Working with copyright, you can never know it all.

At Don Walker's Burdikan Music, I helped him put together a film soundtrack for the SAFC — *Freedom.* The movie bombed, but the LP remains a largely undiscovered gem. I began to really get a feel for doing business — an appetite for doing deals; the satisfaction of a job well done. Contracts and the law fascinated and challenged me; accountancy and tax elements were important; working co-operatively and productively with other people and companies gave me a kick I couldn't get in the lonesome trade of writing.

I was frustrated from time to time, however, when I came across talented songwriters and felt limited in my ability to offer anything but advice. No-one in this business makes it on their own, and music publishing is an area particularly obscured by dark clouds of suspicion and ignorance.

To work as an efficient aid to developing writers, I would need the backing of a strong international company with the resources, connections and people-power to help me help them. In MCA, I found this — and let me tell you, I'm one of the fighters for Australian music to the world.

WHAT A MUSIC PUBLISHER DOES

"What exactly does a music publisher do?" is the baffled query one gets from everyone, from supposedly experienced band managers to casually interested taxi-drivers. As Devil follows the Phantom, the next question arrives right on its heels. "You publish sheet music, right?"

Let me state this right up front — the production of sheet music is a rather minor arm of the business of major music publishers.

A lay peson would best regard a publisher in a similar light to a record company. If you're a writer, going to the former is generally a step you should consider before approaching the latter. A good music publisher, in my eyes, is in contact with all facets of the music industry — studios, producers, record companies, radio, print and visual media, film clip directors, managers, booking agents and recording artists at large.

With some assistance, the business administration side of publishing can be picked up by an amateur — a writer or manager — but that's only the beginning. Whether you see yourself as a solo artist, part of a band or a songwriter who will produce material for other artists to record, a large part of your career and its resultant income will probably derive from the exploitation of your songwriting.

A music publisher — like an agent, a manager or a record company — will take a percentage of your earnings in return for the creative management and promotion of your career.

One hundred percent of nothing is, of course, nothing. As in all other aspects of business, deals have been made between basically incompatible people, and sour grapes are easy pickings in showbiz when you tune into the grapevine. It's true that some publishers have exploited the inexperienced, acting as little other than administrators and bankers, but from this side of the desk you also learn of unco-operative and lazy writers who take their advances and run — not to speak of the gambling element in putting your time and money into unproven artists.

I believe that as a music publisher, the field is wide open. There are no limits to how far we can go if the relationship is right. MCA/Gilbey writer Tommy Emmanuel, known until now mainly as a very fine guitarist, has had his songs recorded by Sheena Easton, Miguel Bose, the Bushwackers and Doug Parkinson, and Olivia Newton-John has one of his tracks in the can for her new album. We believe this is only the start.

LEGALLY SPEAKING

NYONE preparing to sign an agreement will benefit from expert legal advice. Unfortunately few solicitors appreciate the hit-and-miss, intensely competitive, here-today-gone-tomorrow world of music. Be careful in your choice of legal representative — prolonged wranglings are often little but a clash of egos at the expense of the writer and the company offering the contract. Percentage points are only one aspect of the deal, and I've come to believe 50/50 with the right people is better than 80/20 with the wrong ones.

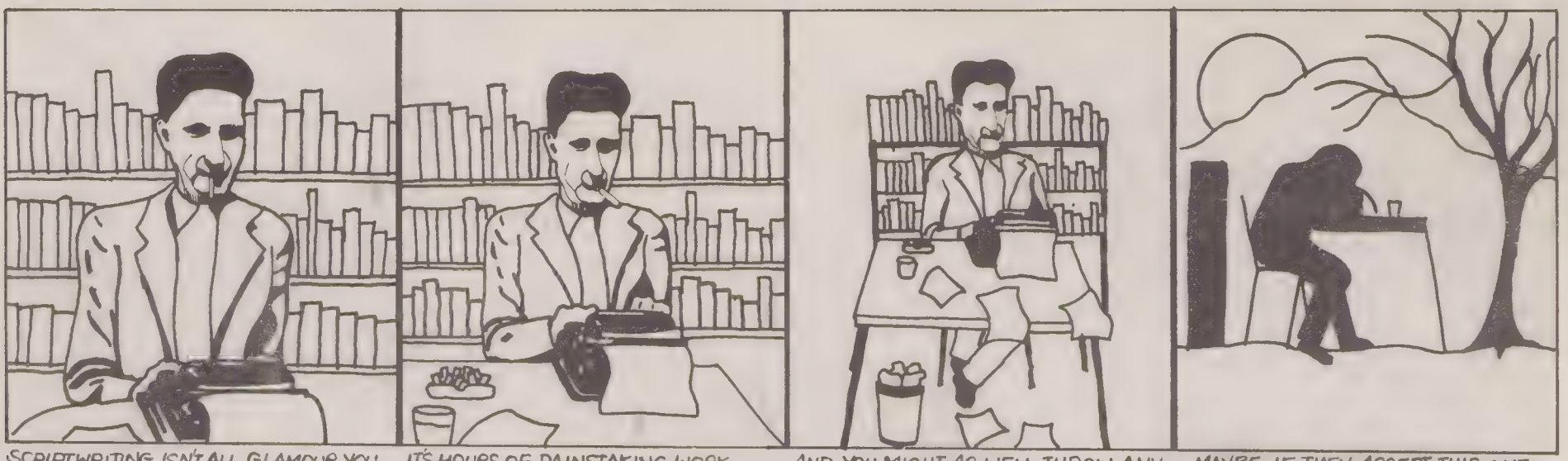
THE RIGHT STUFF

Mere talent is most definitely not enough. An original artist trying to achieve success on the world stage — and let's not be coy, this is what we're after — is facing enormous odds. Just to break even playing around one's home town is a feat these days.

I've read that it's calculated that there are several hundred bands working around Australia. Let me put you right — there are *thousands.* I get up to 40 cassettes hitting my desk per week; Ross Williams, the man in CBS Records' A&R chair, is currently receiving *80 a week!*

To hit the top, you'll need talent PLUS excellent professional advice, good creative input, financial backing, entrepreneurial management and top local and overseas connections from the people working with you — who will need to work as a team. A good publisher can be a vital link.

Face this as soon as possible. You'll need to be co-operative, intelligent, resourceful and determined. You'll need to love what you're doing, and you must want to succeed above all creature comforts. And if you've been blessed with not only talent but a sense of humour — you've got a head start on the rest.


SCRIPTWRITING ISN'T ALL GLAMOUR, YOU KNOW...
IT'S HOURS OF PAINSTAKING WORK SLAVING OVER A TYPEWRITER...
AND YOU MIGHT AS WELL THROW ANY ARTISTIC ASPIRATIONS OUT THE WINDOW - THE PHILISTINES YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH!
MAYBE IF THEY ACCEPT THIS ONE I'LL BE ABLE TO RENT AGAIN...

(Illustrations: James Molloy)

Sophia Turkiewicz *(Silver City)* adds that "you have to tie up loose ends that have been established. Australian scripts have trouble with endings — they promise a lot, and the endings don't deliver the promise. The reasons can be too little funds or getting tired of the project. I work with a shape that you feel intuitively."

However, Sophia had to do eight drafts of *Silver City* — though the shape of the story was there by the third draft. She wrote it over a two-year period, concurrently with other work.

Film and TV writer Ted Roberts feels if you've got a beginning and end, the middle does tend to look after itself — though editing will probably be needed. "It's a disaster to start without structure," he says. "But as for how it all comes about, I don't know which comes first."

Ted finds that he 'night-scribbles', drink-writes and jots at the next set of red traffic lights. He hates script editors, but admits to being lazy about doing it himself, so leaves it to them. "My first draft is to make me happy; my second draft is to make the producer happy; the third is to tie it together."

One method of tackling structure is to use plot cards, on which you write one scene per card, stick them up on the wall and voila! There you have it, for what it's worth. Stephen Spielberg takes this a step further. He draws each camera take on a card — painfully, shot by shot — so his direction is already done before he approaches the set.

Peter Schreck is another writer who uses them, fills them up and then never looks at them again, but reverts to copious notes. Sophia Turkiewicz works on cards and pins them up to check the rhythm of the structure.

With structure, the first ten pages (ten minutes) of a script are crucial. Before your script gets to the stage of possible production, someone has to read it. The reader may look at the first ten pages to see if they like it — everyone agrees that an audience will decide for itself in the first ten minutes. Peter Schreck relates how "A Yank said to me: 'You gotta give 'em something big, page four!' Well, not necessarily, it could be page six, but it *must* be by page ten."

You need to establish the main character, the dramatic premise *and* the dramatic situation in ten minutes. Also, at the moment, *up*-endings are IN.

However, do not forget the sub-plot — it is a foil, a means of comparison to the main plot. . . a deviation from the main storyline. The sub-plot is an excellent vehicle for time-lapse, cutaways or comedy relief — minor characters are also used as foils to heighten the major characters, and cameo roles can also be very effective.

Try to avoid imitation and be aware of your influences — books, films and other people — when writing a screenplay. Avoid verbal and visual cliches, and forget symbolism it died in the sixties. When working on a storyline, avoid the temptation to succumb to a 'better idea for another story'. It's not. And above all, do not betray the initial impulse that gave birth to the screenplay.

Bob Ellis *(My First Wife)* thinks it's a good idea to collaborate with an audience (friend) when working on structure. "If the audience nods off, you know it's wrong." Bob feels that two drafts are all the writer needs, "or like a mutant child, it will die of shame."

Producer Joan Long believes "your story has to work in context, anthithesis, and drama. Scene breakdowns are helpful." Ellis does not agree. "Unnecessary scenes are immediate products of scene breakdowns (treatments), because you are being required to make decisions without knowing why the characters are doing what they are doing."

Do not be terrified of plotting and structure. Structure is often something you recognise retrospectively, but you must have the spine of the story. After all, it's best just to *get on* with it.

NOW, presuming you've come this far and you think I've given you a fair coverage of Screenwriting, I must confess to you that I have not.

There are a million important things I badly wanted to elaborate on — like Dialogue, for instance — and there's a million things I don't know. I'm a novice, too. But the Editor couldn't afford David Williamson or Bob Ellis to write this story, so he had to settle for me.

If, however, you're a real masochist and *still* want to be a Screenwriter, there are several things you could do: like a scriptwriting course — be most choosy where you do it. Some may be OK, but check the sources of information and be careful you're not processed too much. Or go to screenwriting seminars: most of the speakers say that the only real value of these is the interaction with like-minded writers, and I must agree that it is exciting to talk to writers — to know you are not alone, and that we all have the same problems. Read books on the subject, usually available from Performing Arts Bookshops. Contact the Australian Writers' Guild — you can become an associate member for $40 per annum. They will keep you updated and provide a script assessment service, plus legal advice. But above all, keep writing. Show yourself some discipline. If you don't, the producer certainly will.

As a Screenwriter, the most important link is your Producer. You are asking her or him for a moral and financial commitment which lasts for literally years. Your producers should be your mentor, encourager and provider — the writer should therefore be aware of the types of projects each producer favours, and keep an eye on the current financial situation with tax concessions. The producer has to raise the money, and works hard at finding distributors for the product.

What does Producer Joan Long look for?

"The script that stays with you. You ask, 'is it worth making? Why add to the number of bad films around?' It must have Box Office Appeal. The challenge is to make a film that will reach a wide audience and still get across the values you believe in."

Joan favours original material, but adaptations are the most sure-fire successes. Ideas are one thing, but the ability to turn out a well-crafted script is another. The writer must have the talent to lift the script off the ground with each successive draft; the writer must be prepared to *keep going.* With perseverance comes the payoff.

Producer Hal McElroy puts credence in the 'equilateral triangle': writer/producer/director. No party should dominate the other.

"Approach the producer as early as possible," Hal advises.

"Don't write the script first and *then* send it. The concept includes *Title:* your concept can be dealt with as one line and a title — as it will when it is advertised to the public. Run the concept past your friends. . . their reactions will tell you." Hal has never undertaken a production on less than six rewrites — *Return To Eden* took a *year* of rewrites.

David Elfick warns of the lawyers who will advise you to make dissatisfying changes — and *then* they'll invest. There has never been any guarantee that your script won't be bastardised or turned into a musical.

"The producer is not omnipotent. Film is a boxing match, with the director as referee." David favours the director, if necessary at the expense of the writer. "The budget may force you to change or cut scenes — and you've got to give the director the best shot."

They may all say they read one script a day, but none has ever produced an unsolicited script. They think you should interest them in a *concept.* Write a letter with an outline of a very good idea, instead of sending them a script. Who knows, they might ring you. "We're not Philistines," they attest.

Bob Ellis reckons that "producers are in love with improvable mediocrity that they have to do a lot of work on." But Joan Long has the final word. . .

"The difference between the talented, successful writer and the talented, *un*successful writer is often the application of bottom to seat."

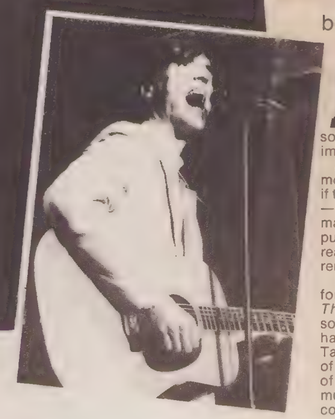
A clear case of getting ON your butt and doing it!

HEAD, HANDS & FEET

The moving parts of DAVID BYRNE, as observed by LYNDEN BARBER

(Pix: Ian Greene)

HIS voice quavered like a suburban kid on his first spaniel eyes swivelling rapidly towards every corner of the room except my own. He was even playing constantly with a pocket calculator as if he were a child toying with a scale model car. I had over-confidence into a sympathetic begun answering the first question. And yet I liked David Byrne a lot.



I FOUND him a polite, modest and interested man; not at all like the self-obsessed drones who waste so much of our time with inconsiderate attempts to impress.

A desire to upholster the ego is probably the motivating factor behind most careers on the stage, and if that is true in the case of Byrne, he has handled it well — though somehow I doubt that it is. He appears to be a man who has forced himself to endure the rigours of public exposure and along the way discovered that it's really not so painful after all. His artistic temperament remains intact.

Despite his more recent extra-mural work — music for a "theatre project" by director Robert Wilson called *The Knee Plays* and a lyric for a forthcoming LP of love songs by minimalist composer Philip Glass — Byrne has lost none of his verve as the motive force behind Talking Heads. He's just written nearly an album's worth of new songs which mark a return to his earlier methods of composition — words first, music to fit — with the musical direction swerving unexpectedly towards country.

The reason for holding court in the Victorian baroque splendour of this hotel — the type where the air is Hoovered — appeared to be the imminent release of *Stop Making Sense*, a film shot in concert on the Heads' last American tour by Jonathan Demme, of *Melvin And Howard* fame.

Without wasting time in detailed description, I will say this: it is a brilliantly made film — certainly in the class of Scorsese's *The Last Waltz*, the nearest obvious parallel, and in some ways a step up. Firstly, there are no time-wasting interview sequences to plough through. Secondly, the Heads' show filmed here has an inherent cinematic quality to it. We are treated, for instance, to an opening sequence in which Byrne strides onto the stage alone, places a ghetto blaster on the floor, turns on a beat-box track and proceeds to strum out the chords to *Psycho Killer* on an acoustic guitar. The world's first psychotic electro-troubador has arrived.

From here onwards, members of the extended Heads lineup are added song by song, back lighting, stage set and camera configurations shifted throughout. Far from acting as some star hireling — an increasing habit for name directors tempted to shoot videos — the idea for the film was Demme's, and it shows. . . despite the fact that last year's stunning Narara performance followed an identical pattern.

"I'm pleased with it," said Byrne, addressing the coffee table uncertainly. "I think it's going to be a little surprising for some people that we've come up with a performance film that in a way is so traditional, and that it doesn't have any fancy editing or any special effects or lots of things that are added — in a way, a very straightforward document of the performance."

Did he think the film would appeal to people who'd never listened to Talking Heads before?

"I hope so; that's a big reason why we did it, that it might be seen as a film for people who don't listen to the band and for people who might know of the band but certainly wouldn't go to a rock concert."

Talking Heads have been well served by film and video. Byrne directed the video for *Burning Down The House* and part-directed *Once In A Lifetime*, two of the most original and watchable video clips ever made.

MANY groups are lackadaisical about their visual presentation. By way of contrast, Talking Heads have always shown an interest — right down to hiring Robert Rauschenberg to do a sleeve for the last LP. With video becoming so important, did Byrne find there was a real poverty of visual ideas in the music business, or did he think things were improving?

"I don't know if they're improving; there's a real glut of visual things, and the problem is they're not coming from the bands themselves, they're coming from the video directors — some of whom are good, and some of whom are just hacks. It's a little disappointing that a band who would spend so much time and care on a recording will just hire somebody else's sensibility that might not be anything like what theirs is to do their video. I don't think it's terrible to hire somebody else to do it, it's fine, but it's bizarre when it's a mish-mash.

"A lot of bands are very careful about their clothes, I think — it's something that's a lot more immediate, you can touch it, everybody feels confident that they can decide what to wear onstage, or what their clothing image should be. It's funny that people don't extend it beyond their physical bodies to their record sleeves, their videos, whatever. A lot of people do, but it's surprising how many don't."

Even the clothes are being taken care of by the record companies now. More and more record companies are making suggestions as to which outfitters to go to, more and more record sleeves are giving credits to the tailor or designer.

"Gosh. I never would even have thought of that. That's another job for people, then — that's another job opportunity, outfitting new bands."

I wasn't sure whether he was that interested in what was happening in popular music to any detailed extent, I said.

"I know a little about what's going on, but not all that much. I'm aware of how popular Frankie Goes To Hollywood's become lately — in this country."

Did he like their records?

"I like their singles. I think they're wonderfully mixed, and all that. To tell you the truth, I don't think they can sing very well. I think they should have hired another singer. Which is a shame, because I think they do have something to say. I like all their graphics and all their paraphernalia."

What did he think of the increasing importance of image — if indeed he thought it was increasing?

"I think it's kind of natural — because I know even myself, if I want to buy a musical group I want them to stand for something that's a whole attitude. There's other people who're good songwriters or singers or something like that, but a lot of the time if a band is doing something, you want it to be a whole package, so that everything's co-ordinated, so that it makes an overall statement about an attitude or lifestyle or political point of view or whatever."

It particularly hit me watching the film that there's nothing even the most zealous anti-racist or feminist could find to object to in Talking Heads. Had that ever occurred to Byrne?

"No, it didn't occur to me too often until I had talks with people during the tour or whatever, and they made such a point of the fact the group was half-black, half-white and that we all seemed to get along together and that sort of thing. I had to think 'How come there's been plenty of other groups that've been mixed racially and no-one seemed to notice it, almost?'"

Did he see himself as a fairly non-macho person?

"I guess so. Last week I was playing around at home and got this heavy metal sound on my guitar and started playing these heavy metal riffs, and I can't deny it was a lot of fun. My face automatically started screwing up."

Machismo and aggression aren't necessarily synonymous.

"It's there, it's a feeling like any other — I think there's other performers that present it a lot better than I ever could. I'll leave it to them."

Byrne doesn't present himself as a sexual figure — unlike so many frontmen — but has taken various characteristics and blown them up to be larger than life. It's obviously now at a level of parody. Did he slide into doing these things, perhaps as a way of feeling more comfortable on stage, and suddenly think 'Hey, this is getting close to parody?'

"Well, no, but now that you mention it I'd better watch out for that. It's intentional that some of it is humorous, but I'd also hope it would be kind of moving or touching, formal, or something, at the same time. Like some of the spastic dancing I do — it's worked out, almost choreographed I guess you'd say, and I think of it as a form of dance vocabulary I've developed over the years and will probably have to abandon at some point, or it'll become a parody.

"I can see that's starting to happen. A comedy programme in the States, *Saturday Night Live*, just last week they did a parody on me in the film; this guy came out and imitated me and my movements and what not."

What did it feel like watching that?

"It felt pretty strange! It was a combination of feeling very strange and being flattered. But it makes me think that I should probably stop doing that."

There's a whole tradition of funny walking right from Charlie Chaplin through Max Wall — an English music-hall star — to John Cleese. At one point, Cleese couldn't go out without people saying 'Go on, do yer silly walk!', it became almost a noose around his neck. Had Byrne ever experienced anything comparable to that? Do people expect him to be exactly the way he is onstage?

"Yeah, yeah, that's real common — they expect you to be wilder and louder like a stage performer in your daily life. It's natural though, and it happens all the time; people don't separate acting or something from a person's real life. Also, people get stuck playing the same roles in films or on stage or whatever and it reinforces that even more, and they might be completely different."

Did Byrne find it difficult being, for want of a better phrase, a 'celebrity' sometimes?

"Sometimes it's unsettling. At the grocery store, buying toilet paper, whatever, someone wants your autograph; or in a record store just browsing, someone wants to find what records you're buying or checking out or whatever. The kind of thing is unsettling because you want to have the opportunity to make mistakes, try things out like anybody else. I want to be able to buy records that I might not like, just to check them out.

"But I'm not complaining; it has its good sides too. I suppose the best part is that I can meet people and talk to people who might not talk to me otherwise, but who I'd like to meet or talk to. I don't mean film stars or anything like that, but people who might be doing something that might be interesting."

What did he think of the Staple Singers' version of *Slippery People*?

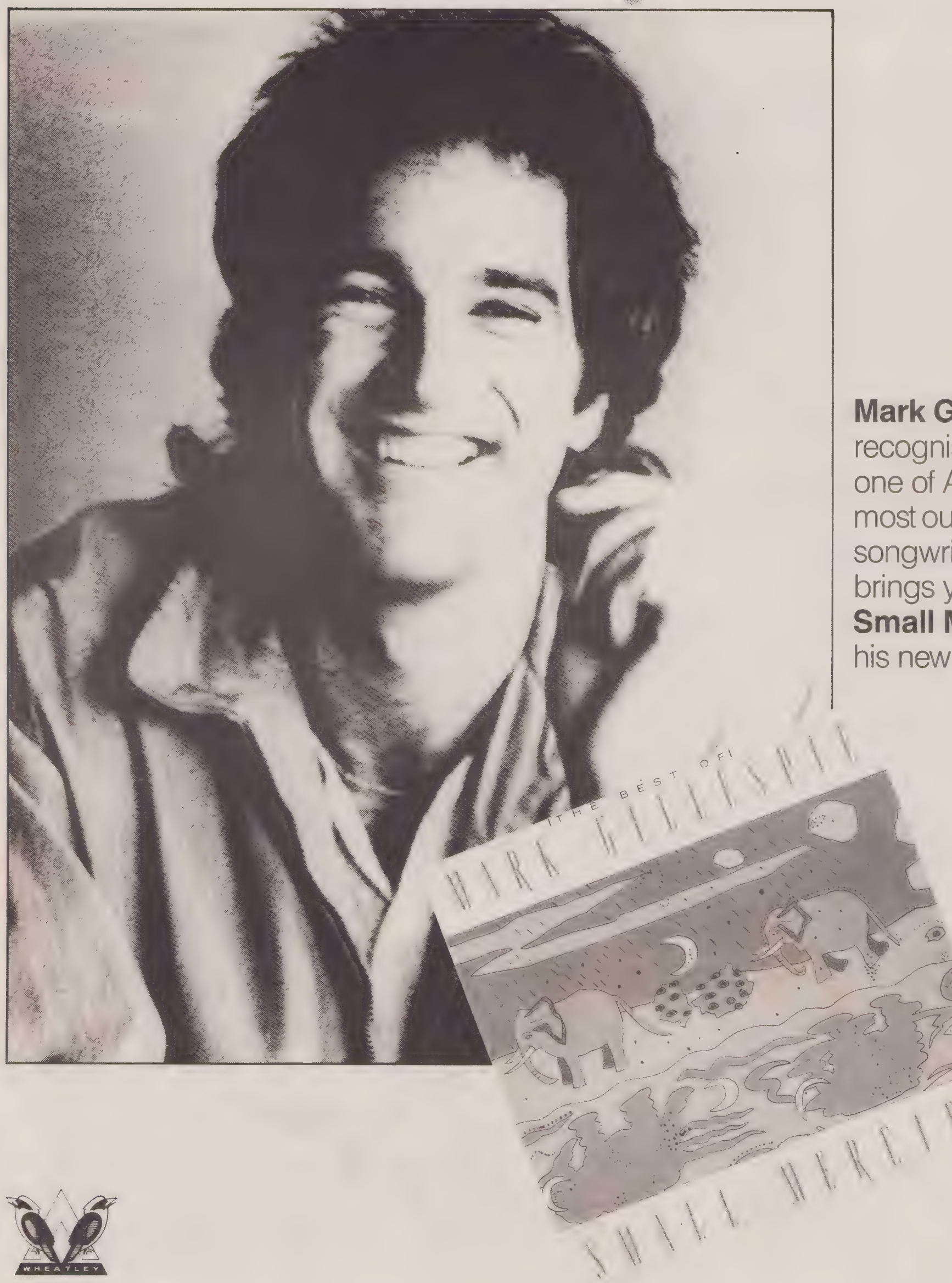
"I just heard it, I went out and bought a pullover and heard it in the shop. I'd heard it before, but I like it a lot. That's the most exciting thing, to hear it unexpectedly over the speaker of a shop or something, or hear it coming out of someone else's radio.

"I think it's great. I've listened to their records so much, and in a way their earlier records were an indirect inspiration for that song, so it was kind of wonderful that they'd be the ones to do that. I also heard a recording of *Psycho Killer* by a group called the Flying Pickets, an acappella version. It's neat. It's kind of doo-wop."

I liked David Byrne a lot. . .

SMALL MERCIES

at last!



Mark Gillespie recognised as one of Australia's most outstanding songwriters brings you **Small Mercies** his new album.

WHEATLEY

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SOCIAL SATIRE FOR THINKING TWITS

'OxBridge' Humour as practised by the HEEBEEGEEBEES — WANDA JAMROZIK encounters three of its sharpest exponents, and seizes on the sendup. . .

MIKE, Phil and Angus together are the HeeBee-GeeBees. They are also three-fifths of the team currently presenting *'Radio Active'* in clubs and theatres across Australia. You couldn't hope to meet a more amiable threesome.

Though Mike takes pains to point out that he attended Oxford Polytechnic (definitely not the same as the hallowed University), he shares the good manners and polite charm of his rather more well-brought-up partners in parody.

The conversation is witty and entertaining and conducted almost exclusively in the second and third person, as is the trademark of those fortunate(?) enough to have received their education in the elitist public schools of Olde England.

Of course, it's a rather obvious shot: upper-class twits content to provoke giggles without rocking the boat. And it *is* selling them short.

On the other hand, the HeeBeeGeeBees trade on their origins in the tradition of OxBridge student humour, a tradition that has produced such luminaries as Peter Cook, John Cleese, Rowan Atkinson and a dozen other standard-bearers of British comedy. It guarantees them an audience, particularly in a place like Australia where the English upper-class is a thing we love to hate, but with which we are nevertheless keen to demonstrate our affinity. The HeeBeeGeeBees are in two minds about it themselves.

ANGUS (the Serious Thinker): "I agree with you. It is a privileged system and Oxford-and-Cambridge is a privileged university system, because its existence is due to the public school system, largely, though it is gradually breaking down now. Yes, it is a basically corrupt system, but... um... I don't know what it's got to do with our show, really!"

Having 'arrived' on the comedy circuit at the same time as London's Comic Strip was presenting a whole range of alternative acts intent on proving that you didn't need to have a posh accent to be funny, the HeeBeeGeeBees endured quite a backlash.

PHIL: "There are people who speak well who aren't necessarily raving fascists."

Well, I wasn't exactly suggesting that. Half the British Labour Party is made up of cigar-smoking, plum-in-the-mouth toffs with a social conscience. It is significant, though, that this ability to 'speak well' is implictly understood to mean speaking with a public school accent. The scars of a rigid class structure are so deep that the bearers are themselves unaware of them.

RADIO ACTIVE is the name of a BBC radio show currently entering its fifth series, and soon to tickle Australian airwaves. It's also the title of the touring show, the pretext of which is an outside broadcast conducted by the world's first international radio station. It's a strict format that allows the perfomers to parody DJs, interviewers/ees, pop stars and members of the audience who take part in fun competitions.

ANGUS: "It's satirical, but not politically satirical. It's socially satirical."

MIKE: "It has a bite, but not at politicians. It takes the mickey out of people you see every day on the media, and it points out the absurdity of the way they carry on. We do some silly things, some straight jokes, some clever-clever stuff."

PHIL: "It has a liberal sprinkling of swear words for all the family."

Guest 'pop stars' will include Drone Drone, Frankie Goes To The Bank, Coutoure Club, Bruce Springbok, and his Royal Purpleship, Ponce.

Phil, owing to his propensity for a double chin, gets to be Boy George in an elaborate mock video that pushes the gimmick of cross-dressing to absurdity. It occurred to me that this sounds like nothing more than a good ol' poofta joke, or at least an inherently conservative form of humour, acting as it does to reaffirm the audience's sense of its own normality. The lads are quick to attack the over-simplification of this charge.

ANGUS: "As far as Boy George goes, you're not picking on transvestites, you're picking on someone who has made a great deal of money out of an *image*."

But, but, then the HeeBeeGeeBees come along and make money out of the absurd way in which Boy George has made money...

PHIL: "Nothing like as much as he does!"

MIKE: "You're actually *changing* people's stance on normality. It's quite acceptable to like Boy George and the way he dresses and all that. Once someone becomes established in the music industry, then they *are* normality."

They go on to discuss how their parodies are done not so much out of malice as out of familiarity with a particular aspect of pop culture. It's familiarity that allows them to seize on the ludicrous features of a 'personality', and highlight them in a skilfully constructed pastiche. It's true that this is comedy of a different order from that churned out by the likes of Weird Al, where the joke turns solely on the punning lines inserted into an already established song.

You have to admit, though, that it's a funny way to earn a living. Strange that the grand old universities of England should be famous for their buffoons rather than their nuclear physicists.

PHIL: "Well, it's not really. Quite a lot of people who went to Oxford and Cambridge have gone into the Media. A lot of them end up in advertising... or merchant banks — going down the scale, as it were, from where we are. On the other hand, the people in the city are doing very well for themselves, and we're not doing very well at all, financially or in terms of respectability. What we're actually doing is prolonging the period of indecision known as 'university'. It's fun, or it was!"

But how satisfying is it, devoting your life to poking fun at the most disposable of pop ephemera?

ANGUS: "It's far more satisfying working on your own project which you write and perform and produce yourself rather than being involved as a subsidiary to someone else, which we've also done."

MIKE: "We all get on well and we have a good time."

AWAY from *Radio Active*, the three are involved in a constantly changing range of areas — sometimes as a group, but more often independently. Mike in particular is keen on working as a straight actor, a career which he is pursuing with some success. Of their comedy, however...

MIKE: "If it doesn't work, doesn't make people laugh, then it's just as disturbing as if it were something serious and people said 'rubbish!'. It upsets you just as much."

Besides, despite the underlying frivolity of much of their joint work, it has been pointed out that *Meaningless Songs* probably spelt the end of the Bee Gees as a successful recording entity. Now I ask you, can any man be expected to achieve more in the space of a single lifetime?

As a postscript, I asked the HeeBeeGeeBees whether they would be having a go at Australians in the course of their shows.

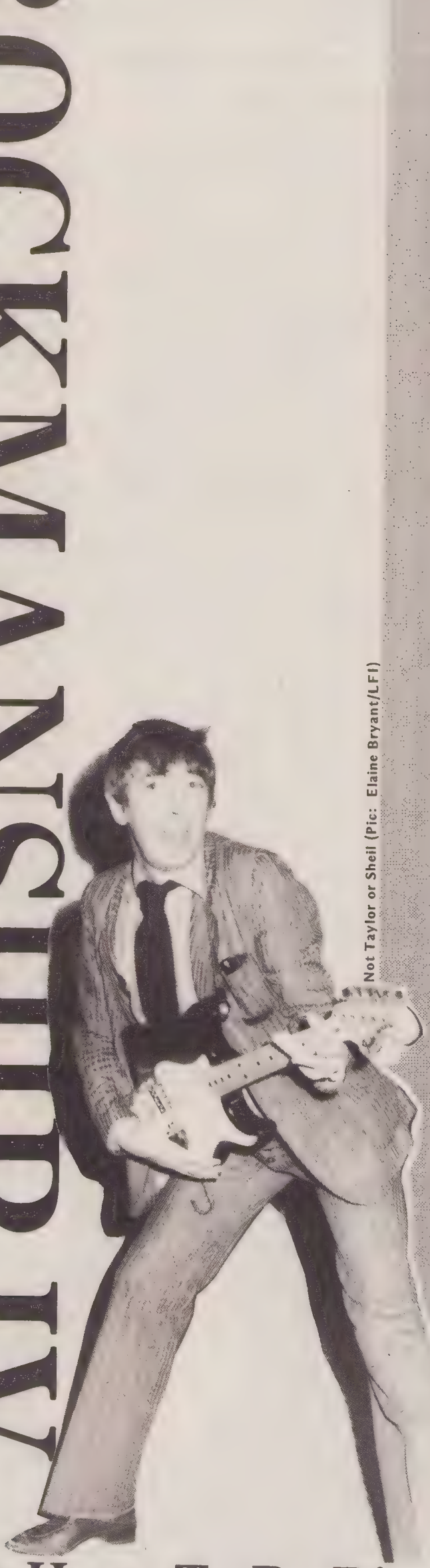
PHIL: "Not a great deal. We think they do it well enough themselves."

L-R: Phil, Mike & Angus (Pic: Greg Taylor)

Bi George

Ponce (Pix: Tom Takacs)

ROCKMANSHIP AI



Not Taylor or Sheil (Pic: Elaine Bryant/LFI)

Too Huge To Be Big... And Too Big For The Double Issue!

Gambits Cool & Cruel — As Masterminded by GREG TAYLOR and PAT SHEIL

ROCKMEN — STAND FIRMER!

IT IS distressing that in this glorious year of quadrennial celebration we must — once again! — begin with an admonition, an indictment, a *nous accuse.* And yet we *must.*

Rockmanship, that fine and subtle art of remaining one step ahead of the rock and roll afterwash, that gentle science of knowing what doesn't matter *and* knowing more about it, has reached a crisis point. Rockmanship Central has recently been forced to act, to save us from ourselves.

But ten days back, we received a report from Whyalla (Chapter 301) that the entire committee had released a single (under the *nom de vinyl* of 'The Torrens Twins'); further, that they were actually *doing pub gigs,* not to mention promoting it with *AM radio interviews!* What have we come to (or on)? Naturally we were obliged to cancel Badge Numbers 567 to 603*, and declare a large part of South Australia a disaster area.

This, unfortunately, is not an isolated incident. Even in the more sophisticated urban centres and in Brisbane, cases of Rockmen confusing the business of *appearing* one-up with actually doing something about it are rife! Perhaps we must start the new year with a return to basics, ie an insistence on *technique* above *taste.*

Read, remember, and regurgitate:

I. Knowing your shit isn't the same as knowing the facts.
II. Knowing the facts won't keep you out of the shit.
III. If they don't know that you don't know, who's to know?
IV. When they find out, it should be too late.
V. Whoever seems *to be in the know, and seems to know that* you *know that he* doesn't *know his facts (but obviously knows his shit), is either a shit or a know-nothing. And that's a fact.*

Difficult? Tricky? No! Lower your opponents, elevate yourself, or — as our Spiritual Founder, the late Stephen Potter says — 'If you're not one-up, you're one down'. Or (for those who've but recently put away the Play-Do): THE ROCKMAN MUST BE SEEN TO BE SIX MONTHS AHEAD OF NEW YORK, NINE MONTHS AHEAD OF BERLIN, AND FOUR TO FIVE YEARS AHEAD OF *COUNTDOWN.*

CORRESPONDENCE

THE LETTERS — as is their wont — keep pouring in. It warms our hearts to think that so many people rather hear our side of the story than consult their friends, their parents *or* their tour managers. While some are requests for technical advice and others just calls from the wild, they all show an encouraging unity of purpose.

Hey!
Do you guys just make this stuff up? Does any of it really work?

Jurden Smedge,
Campsie, NSW

No. Yes.

Dear Sirs,
Is rock'n'roll really as cheap and petty as you say it is? Isn't there a place for the fresh, idealistic musician in today's pop world?
Sincerely,

Cynthia Simpson-Wallace,
Bellevue Hill, NSW

Yes. No.

Rockmen,
Julian Lennon does OK, doesn't he? My old man used to be a roadie for Hush. If I shot him, would it help?

'Demo Taper',
Darlinghurst, NSW

Well, yes and no. It's sure to help SOMEBODY...

Dear Central,
There's one thing I don't get. If rock'n'roll bands all took your advice, would anyone actually play any music or have any fun?

Ralph Gorch.
Launceston, TAS

It's hard to say. Does it matter?

PLOYS IN PROGRESS

DESPITE the faction fighting, and perhaps spurred on the drastic reductions of the various Government grants we have been drinking for the last few years, Central's researchers have been steadily perfecting the time-honoured techniques of Rockmanship and developing many new approaches to some of Rock's less well-known trouble spots. An update on recent breakthroughs...

Blockmanship: In an attempt to streamline that most basic of Rockgambits, the act of *disturbing the flow*, and derailing the rave of your well-informed opponent, the boys at the lab have been working on a lowest common denominator approach that shows a lot of promise. Statistics show that when confronted by the man who says "Surely *James Brown Live At The Apollo* was released in the UK as early as 1971?", the best answer is a simple "No".

Clockmanship: Work in this field goes, for now, under the following loose working definition — "The art of being late and having a drink and a seat waiting for you". As we go to press, much of this work is still in the "pure" rather than "applied" area, and is primarily concerned with avoiding punctuality. We are assured however that ploys are now being tested that will guarantee full creature comforts for up to 45 minutes after specified arrival time, and rumour has it that the two-hour mark will be reached in the New Year.

Stockmanship: With thanks due to our Red Eye Reader, John Power, we can now make mention of an exciting development by our Retail Response Group. Central to the notion of Stockmanship is the age-old dilemma of the man who doesn't have the requested item on his shelves, and in all likelihood has never heard of it. The trick here, as always, is *never apologise.* If a customer gives you a hard time because he can't find "the new Sheffield Undercuts' album", these are among the responses...

WRONG: *"Er, we're waiting for the Compact Disc..."*
RIGHT: *"Look, mate: we've got the whole Top Forty here. Every one. All forty of 'em. Can you read? I've got a list — if it's on it I've got it. Get the picture?"*
SUPER RIGHT: *"I had to send them back — I realised the high frequency response was all over the place on a couple of tracks. Not that the average Undercuts fan would hear the difference I s'pose, but it's a pity EMI didn't notice — I understand they're having to re-master the whole album..."*

HI-FLYIN': THE FREE AIR TICKET REAFFIRMED

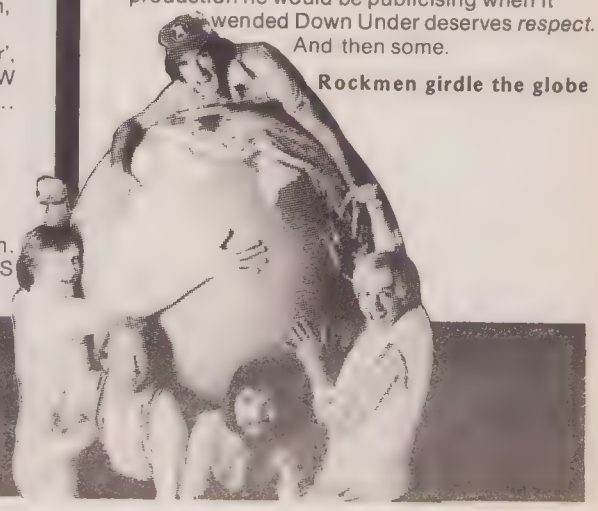
IN THE midst of decay, detrition and general dipshits, 1984 has seen some saving examples of Rockmanship brilliance. Thankfully, our rigorous programme of back-to-basics, prune the pricks and weed out the wankers has been vindicated — nay, *inspired* — by the success of a handpicked team of alumni. Let the names 'Baker', 'Coupe' and 'Tripp' be forever inscribed on whatever Rockmen use for a heart.

GLENN A. BAKER (Associate Member No. 309) needs no introduction: his epic battle in forcing every media outlet to style him as 'Australia's foremost rock historian', 'Australia's most active and highly regarded specialist rock writer/researcher and radio/television personality', and most recently, 'Rock Brain Of The Universe' is pondered over wherever Rockmen foregather.

But not only does Glenn A. know his shit and make sure that *everyone else* knows it; this man can reduce any recent conversation to something approaching awe with his casual reference of: 'When I had to go to Toronto for one night to see a Beatles show.'

The full details will doubtless be revealed in the maestro's next book/radio show/TV special/album launch, but down here at Central we feel that anyone who can command a free *lightning* trip to *Canada* just to catch a production he would be publicising when it ...wended Down Under deserves *respect.*

And then some.



Rockmen girdle the globe

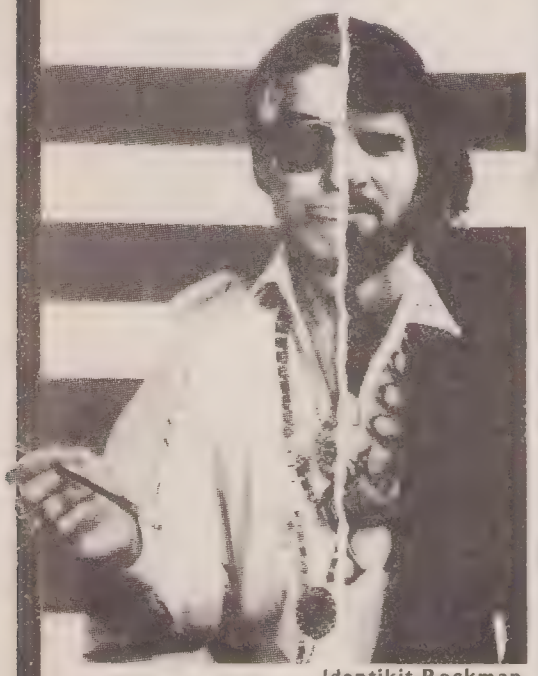
ROCKMANSHIP IV

STUART COUPE (Badge No. 7), manager of the Hoodoo Gurus, publicist for the Hoodoo Gurus, and general rock critic-at-large (about the Hoodoo Gurus) similarly needs no introduction: even the walls of Surry Hills know him intimately. As a frequent Grand Slam winner in the Hipper-Than-Thou Pro-Am tournaments, Coupe is no stranger to talking about exotic locations, but his steady, gritty O.S. play this year has left critics agape.

Halfway through a three-month American tour of the Hoodoo Gurus, sitting in your *own New York office*, filing your regular *Sun-Herald* column with a rave about the three-month American tour of the Hoodoo Gurus... This is true grafting Rockmanship, totally beyond sneer, quip or question. 'I GOT MINE', and 1.2 million Sydney readers should read about it!

PHIL TRIPP is a relative newcomer to the ranks of hi-scamming rockmen, but in many ways his extraordinary rise and rise overshadows the work of any stalwart. To land on these shores — not even a Correspondence Member! — but three years back, with nothing but the American Jazz Tours one stood up in, and to parlay Yankee affability into a career as 'Australia's foremost rock-video journalist' is no mean feat. But to leap from this comfortable round of seminars and merchandising features into a round-the-world fact-gathering mission for the Australian Film Commission — if this is Tuesday why am I speaking French at the St. Tropez Rock Video Conference? — is the sort of utter, consummate Rockmanship that we at Central can only applaud and envy.

Tripp, ever the brilliant eccentric, is rumoured to be writing his own step-by-step analysis of 'Invent The Market, Then Corner It' for an accredited South Californian business college (all correspondence members). While we await this with bated gasp, we urge you all to 'Think Lip — Think Tripp': He is a living affirmation of that fundamental Rockman creed, 'If In Doubt, Be An Expert'.



Identikit Rockman

EXPERTS — IS THERE AN ANSWER?

AGAINST the Hi-Flyin' trio detailed above... we think not. At this level of grandmaster play, an extraordinary intuitive response (like McMillan's '*Who* the fuck is Saint Tropez?') may provide temporary relief, but the average Rockman should avoid (like the plague) such experts who are also expert Rockmen. Their reward or comeuppance may have to await a Higher Authority.

But what of the common-or-garden 'Expert', that irritating beast who hogs the conversation and hence all social scoring points by appearing to have more than his fair grasp of pertinent facts? He may be a natural or he may be another Rockman on the make. So the question remains: *How to stop the flow?*

Regular readers of this annual column will recall our detailed explanations of PLONKING (reiterate the least salient point of any conversation until only you are left standing), and OF-THE-PEOPLEMANSHIP ('Of course I don't claim to be an expert, but when I was roadying for Roxy Music in '78, I really got face to face with the realities of that sort of business'). Such lines remain the bread and butter of day-to-day Rockmanship — and long may it be! God (or some Higher Authority) forbid that these simple rustic cure-alls should vanish from our lives.

But, sadly, in the sordidly sophisticated urban environment in which most of us slave our ploy and counter-ploy, more devious (ie *tacky*) devices may have to be reached for. Thus it is with regret yet confidence that we offer SUEMANSHIPSHIP...

EXPERT: "And of course you'll remember that the Things blew their overseas deal in exactly the same way. A & M had cross-collateralised the video rights to De Beers, and MTV couldn't go to high rotation because of the Angola fallout — I mean, isn't that how it came down?"

ROCKMAN: "Yes..." *(Pause while obviously struggling with the urge to tell tales out of school)*; "It *is* a difficult situation. But I really shouldn't comment — yes, I know we're amongst friends, but one does have a responsibility... You didn't know about the court case? Yeah, a sad business... wish I hadn't been called, but there it is. Let's talk about *Art* — or anything..."

WHEN IS IT OK TO SIGN TO MUSHROOM?

SOME WOULD say "Always", some would say "Never", and, as usual, all of them would be ***wrong***. TIMING BEATS TASTE — how often have we reaffirmed this basic precept in our post-graduate 'Record Companies: Which & When?' course?

The same general principles may be applied to any company (see McCusker's sod-breaking pamphlet 'Warner's, Electric Or Atlantic?', price $1.69 plus postage from our Warrnambool dump). But the average Rockman should avoid the subtle nuances of Major International gambiting, at least until a minimum of two have responded with an 'I found your demo, let's have lunch' opening. (See *Rockman Review*, March '83, for the most recent authoritative analysis: 'Major Finessing — Up Your Tour Support & Then Some'.) For now (and then some), Mushroom remains the ideal name to flaunt and (occasionally) to do business with.

The underlying ***playthrough*** is obvious, and has been standardised since the late '70s. Be your schtick dress-designing, poster art, photography, video conceptualisation or even the humdrum business of playing music, you have always been able to get UP by playing DOWN with Mushroom.

A languid "Of course, Michael's interested..." followed by either: a) "... but they want the residuals till 1994", or: b) "... but I saw what happened to my mates in Skyhooks/Split Enz/Sports/Jo Jo Zep/The Models etc.", has usually been enough to get drugged-out nods for the knowing (and vice versa). The legend that Michael Gudinski has a fist in every pie, a nose beneath the ground, immediately establishes *your* enterprise as a *virile happening thang*.

But recently, a whole new (or at least excitingly revisionist!) line has emerged. Jimmy Barnes, Richard Clapton — need we say more?

Probably. Observe that Mushroom can now be played as a refuge for your (obviously) advanced career. Clapton's words reported in this very paper (*Issue 245*) capture perfectly the slightly world-weary, *fin de siecle*, all's fair in love and rock'n'roll atmosphere some of you should aspire to: "Yeah, sure I've been around long enough to have heard all these different stories about past events with Mushroom. But when you look at that in a different light, *because* Gudinski and I have been mates for a long time — it's been many years — I guess that's also really worked in my favour. Like, if someone was to question me about what it would be like for a totally new, young band (to sign with Mushroom), I honestly don't know..."

... Or care! Brilliant lateral putdown of anyone within range who dares to be Under Thirty! Rockmen of increasing age, weight or baldness should never fear to play the 'I GOT MINE' gambit. It is, after all, what Rockmanship pretends to.

HIPPER-THAN-THOU HIP RADIO

Or 'When Is It Cool To Join Triple J (And When Is It Cooler To Leave)?'

FOR MANY years, a deep schism has rent our Media Studies College regarding 'underground' radio: the 2JJJ's, 3RRR's, 4ZZZ's and 56789QQQ's, plus their piously poorer relations like 2SER, 3PBS, 4MBS etc.

The younger undergraduates have always hankered for more 'Me And George Wayne Are Just Like *That*' tutorials, despite professorial warnings that George is a bit like that, too. But the more mature Diploma students have demanded that all courses in Station Sucking be branded as 'revisionist', not to mention 'fucking tedious and irrelevant'.

However the latter's impact on the curriculum has been weakened by a faction split. The neo-Trotskyite-arts-collective-dance-theatre Aboriginal Land Rights group want more lessons in posing as revolutionary activists with the new low-power FM licence scene, while the revisionists quote Norman Mailer: "There's nothing wrong with selling out, except when you wanna sell out, nobody wants to buy." They maintain that Stuart Cranney, Jonathon Coleman, Danno M'butu *et al* are the correct role models: the really *professional* Mediaman knows when to dump the counter-culture and join a fabulously wealthy commercial station. And does so, by Golly!

Quite frankly, we don't know what to advise, unless it's something in Television...

TOUR PROMOTION

Daring Dinosaurs & The Comfortable Avant Garde

WAY BACK in Rockmanship II, we noted various scams pertaining to touring either 'Old Lags' or 'Hip & Obscure English Bands'.

The practice and its associated kudos was common then, and even commoner now: frankly, when the big summer attractions are Deep Purple, Jethro Tull and Rod Stewart or extremely safe 'subversives' like Johnny Rotten or Lou Reed, the Old Lag bit reeks of desperate greed rather than the fine and manly art of Rockmanship. And the only hip and obscure bands apparently worth bringing out from England are usually Australian anyway, viz. Nick Cave, the Go-Betweens, Moodists, Triffids etc.

What the world needs now... is Rockmen Promoters (ie people *talking* about being promoters) with vision. Double vision. Don't think 'Act' without thinking 'Venue'. Consider the following scenario...

ROCKMAN I: "Yeah, we're working on bringing out Black Sabbath around Christmas..."
ROCKMAN II: (*yawn*)
ROCKMAN I: "... for the Hiltons, of course..."
ROCKMAN II: (*stunned silence*)

Rockman II may be able to recover from this brilliant gambiting — yet who *knows* what madness the Hilton Hotel chain's entertainment officer is truly capable of? — but any capable umpire or dumb observer would give the game to Rockman I. He is the man who understands that it ain't what you bring, it's who you dish it out to that counts.

ROCKMANSHIP

Considerable success has already been reported with "We're starting Joni Mitchell off at the Hip Hop club this time round. . .", while "Patti Smith wants to do a week or two at St. George's Leagues — just for fun!" caused several ripples recently.

And down here at Central, we could only applaud — discreetly — the enterprising young thing who announced with studied casualness that the Adelaide Arts Festival might feature the Ramones *and* Wayne Newton as a double bill this year. Or the one after. . .

BENEFITS, POLITICS & GENERAL HALO-SHIP

***'Be sincere, as long as you don't mean it'* (J.W. Grubblesnutch)**

WHAT CAN the Rockman get out of being selfless? Plenty — as long as he knows when to put the boot into Idealism. *Flexibility* is the key to Halo-Play.

In some situations, sickening as it is to contemplate, you may have to be holier than Redgum. Should you, on the other hand, cross anyone like that — the wild-eyed 'What can Rock do for the Whales Starving In Nicaragua?' kinda guy — then a resolute counter must be applied.

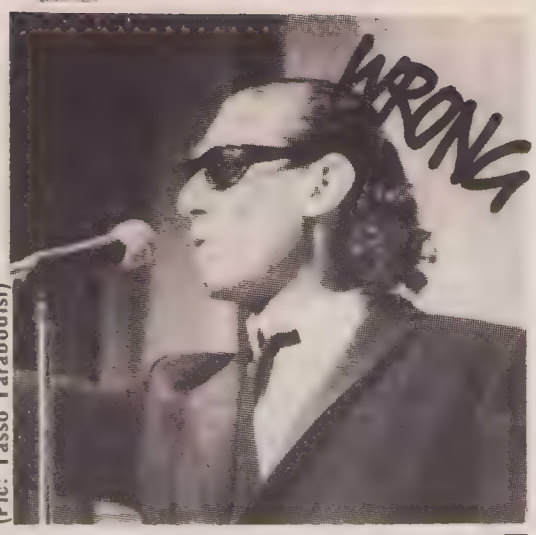
If in company liable to be sympathetic to the mush, *plonking* is the steadiest defence. "Yes, but is it too *late?* I mean, God knows, the Poles can't *rock'n'roll*" (pause to signify the Poles have more important matters to mess with), "but last time I was in Gdansk I was fortunate enough to be invited to a secret concert for Solidarity, and, y'know, it was just trad jazz in a warehouse *bathroom,* but somehow it really meant something. I mean, there weren't any *stars* — just people whose lives were at stake. . ."

If nothing else, this sort of rotund rubbish will distract the opponent's rave: if he gamely gets back to his activities in Refugee Rock, a murmured "I understand Bangladesh is still waiting for George Harrison's lawyers to find the money", should gather the wavering cynics to your side.

In any case, the recent activities of almost-Senator Peter Garrett, not to mention the 'Happy Christmas Ethiopia' monster, have virtually cruelled Mega Do-Gooding for the average Rockman. The only halo liable to be noticed is a *modest* one. Obscure causes are now regarded as slightly passe — the *personal* concern is the benefit concert *you* can do well out of. . .

POSSIBLE: "I just had to do this show for Ian — he lent me his Altecs in Melbourne, and besides, he's taking this *so* seriously. . ."
BETTER: "We're paying the roadies for the week anyway, plus it's a good chance to break in this new material in front of an audience. . ."
MUCH BETTER: "I just had to do it for Odyssey House — I mean, some of my best friends have died there. . ."
SUPER BETTER: "Well. . . what the hell, y'know? We'll just get down, blow a bit, party on. . ."

Alternatively you are faced with the difficult line of shafting the benefit without taking a stance on the cause. The really brutal *long-range* Rockman will destroy any possible wicket (and engender several long libel cases) by investigating just what monies — if any — ended up with the Multiple Tendonitis Society anyway. J. Wallace Grubblesnutch, as ever, provided the ultimate killer response. . .
SELF-APPOINTED BENEFIT PUBLICIST: "And what's impressed me most, working with these acts, is that all of them played merely for expenses. . ."
J.W.: "Yeah. . . Well, my sister died of that last week. By the time the accountants get through with it, maybe there'll be something left over for funeral 'expenses'."



(Pic: Tasso Taraboulsi)

ROCK COMEDY

ALL ROCKMEN should take to heart J. W. Grubblesnutch's telling advice, "Comedy is big. It's no laughing matter."

Despite the risk of actually having to sit through these acts sooner or later, rock comedy is fraught with danger for the unprepared Rockperson. The mindless punter, the individual that Rockman must seem to completely understand in at least a clinical sense, thinks rock comedy is hilarious.

Obviously, Rockman must take one of two basic tacks. Firstly he can suggest that he's a knockabout sort of guy who's fun to be with, and isn't it a pity that this shit isn't *funny?* On the other hand he can take a Precambrian Materialist approach, of which there are two nifty sub-gambits: (a) *Concerned* — "Five or six guys could have worked tonight if they'd hired a support band instead. . ."; and (b) *Pissed Off* — "When you think this turkey's getting paid five hundred bucks to tell jokes that'd get him thrown out of The Domain. . ."

Most work to date has centred on the first, or *Whither Laughs?* as it has come to be known. It seems to work better because it's nastier, and because you don't have to say anything that isn't true. A classic — if extreme — case in point is *Australia, You're Standing In It,* a monument to the gullibility of ABC management that has had Rockmen everywhere proposing all manner of pilot programs. A failsafe response to the very mention of this fiasco is an embarrassed glance into the middle distance and a soft "Oh, dear".

Harder to deal with than the government subsidised version, commercially successful comedy presents its own set of problems. Harder to criticise for being bad art, it lends itself to abuse on the grounds of being cheap and tacky. When a comic is arrested for being *extremely* cheap and tacky, head off any protestations of the martyrdom of modern performers with "Is he that ostentatious person who says 'fuck' all the time?"

If you should find yourself in the priceless position of actually *meeting* one of these characters, ask him in a loud voice to "Tell that great joke about the abo sheila, what'd ya call her? Lubra lips? A classic! The bloke next to me laughed so hard he shat himself!" etc. This is particularly good at parties, better still at his own record launch, and supreme Rockmanship if he actually has no such joke in his routine.

Apart from the mileage to be made from suggesting that the Tayshuses of this world learn most of their lines from the graffiti in the Perth lock-up, Rockman can make caustic hay with the Rodney Rudes, the George Smilovichskirimskikorsokovs, and all the assorted dross that emanates from Jamison Street basements. For example. . .

(Pic: Rhonda Thwaite)

JERK: "Yeah, those guys from the Comedy Store are great! And comics seem to make *heaps* these days."
ROCKMAN: "No, *agents* make heaps these days. It's got so they can walk into that pit and book anyone at random."

The "sensitive, arty" Rockman can do well with the same Jerk by saying. . .
ROCKMAN: "In the old days we used to go down there. The acts were shit, and that was the point. Now you're meant to go down there, watch shit acts and appreciate them!"

Is there any mileage in being pro rock comedy? Reluctantly, we must caution caution. Though rock comics get away with the sort of rubbish that young Rockpersons secretly admire, this is not Rockmanship but a wild — some would say *bestial* — mutation. (Close all windows, spray thoroughly and avoid any exchange of precious bodily fluids is the advice of our Sanitary Inspector, Ms. J. J. Adams.)

We remember — with a shudder — the appalling spectacle of Wilbur Wilde telling a long, involved joke to members of The Brass Band, professional funnymen from San Francisco, *and then forgetting his punch line!* (However we do applaud Wilbur's determined attempt to rebuild his shattered reputation, going anywhere — even *Hey, Hey, It's Saturday Night!* — for a chance to play.)

If you must wear the humour mantle, pose as a writer rather than a practitioner. "I'm working on some Tayshus routines" is safe and solid, as just about anyone who can type is doing just that: better (ie more trendy) is: "They've asked me to develop some material for the second series of *The Gillies Report* — it's just a question of whether I could stand winter in Melbourne, y'know?"

ROCKMEN — THE FUTURE IS YOURS. . .

WELL, it certainly ain't *ours.* Rockmanship Central will be closed for an indefinite period while we relocate from our modest mansion in leafy Darlinghurst to a serviced bunker away from main population centres.

Safety and environmental regulations require that the next stage of our ordered progress be undertaken under tight security and with *minimum* risk to civilians: we can say no more, but when we emerge, "it ain't gonna be purty" as Herr Doktor Sheil's broken English charmingly has it. Is the neutrino mega-gambit barrier impassable? *We think not. . .*

Meanwhile, the good name and day-to-day progress of Rockmanship rests in your hands — you, the dedicated labourers in this fallow field, the unheralded warriors who heard the call and do your bit. The world of rock'n'roll is full of pretenders — but you're the best.

Rockpersons: from a secure height, we salute you!

(ADVERTISEMENT)

KNOW NOTHING — FEEL GREAT!

Are you a 250lb regular guy tired of wimpy 'rockmen' out-posing you on the beach, on the patio, at the party etc?

Is *this* the sort of situation you cringe to remember?

If this looks embarrassingly familiar, you've probably already tried to shape up. Maybe you sent for that course that promises to turn you into a smart-ass in 90 days or your money back?

Did they send you a lot of waffle about 'disturbing the flow', plus these stupid exercises for 'ploys', 'gambits', 'plonking' etc? Did you toss it in the garbage? Of course — but you *still* haven't got your money back, right?

WRONG!

Now, with my revolutionary new 'KNOW NOTHING' method, you can quickly achieve confidence! success! girls! fun! Without boring exercise, study, or *any form of thinking whatsoever!*

Developed over years of encounters with the world's most brutal Rockmen, the 'KNOW NOTHING' method has proved itself the fastest, easiest, *most certain* way of stopping such bullies in their tracks.

Using your own natural ignorance, I will show YOU how *not to care.* The most cutting attack, the most patronising blather can be turned *against* the Rockman when you have mastered 'Blissful Unawareness'.

YOU'VE GOT THE SHOULDERS — LEARN HOW TO SHRUG 'EM!

OF COURSE JOHNNY O'KEEFE TAUGHT BRIAN WILSON EVERYTHING HE KNEW. BLAH BLAH...
HUUUH
I DO WISH DOUG COULD STAND UP FOR HIMSELF!
BRAINS AREN'T EVERYTHING THOUGH, DELVINE
OF COURSE I KNOW WHO REALLY WROTE THE HENDRIX DIARIES BLAH....
DUUH... WHO GIVES A SHIT? C'MON GIRLS: LAST ONE IN THE SURF BUYS THE COKES
BRAINS AREN'T ANYTHING DELVINE!
GEE DOUG, YOU SURE SHOWED THAT SMARTARSE!
(Illustration: James Molloy)

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ILLUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

On Three Separate Stages

ADELE BARNETT takes the extended Silly Season to entertaining extremes during the current Sydney Festival and catches a cross-section of stage shows on offer — Los Trios Ringbarkus' *Outer Sink*, Kathy Lette's *Wet Dreams* and the beguiling *Zastrozzi*, a portrait of the ultimate master criminal.

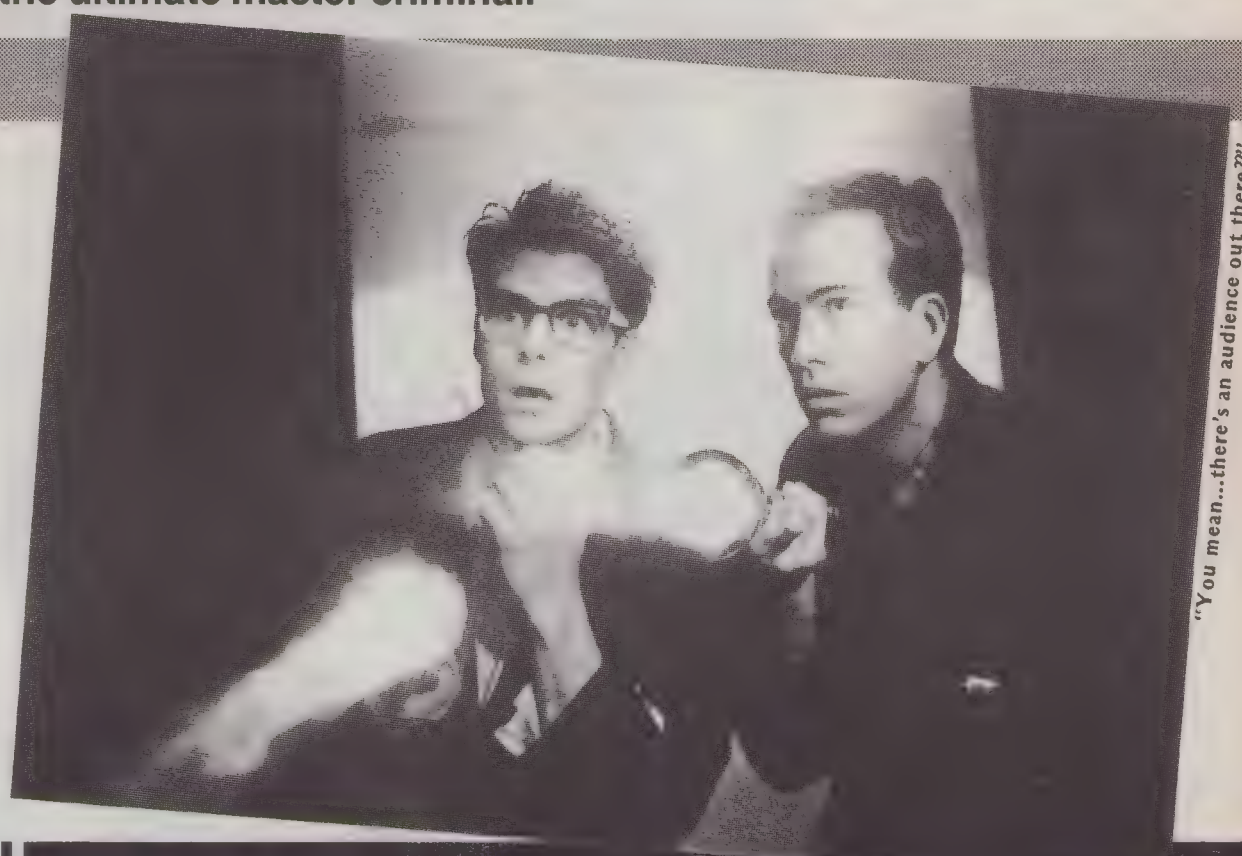
ONE OF the many delusions harboured by Sydneysiders is that the silly season officially ends with the fireworks display — when a white weeping willow wilts upon a massed chorus of *'aahs'*, like some indigenous Hallelujah Chorus. This New Year hysteria induces people to make forgettable resolutions or to rush out and buy a Ken Done T-shirt recording the event. But unless you've escaped to the North Coast to pitch a tent in six inches of monsoonal water or flown to Bali, you're stuck with the Sydney Festival.

The shortform 'Syd Fest' coincides with school holidays and those of several million workers, granted two or four weeks of the year to call their own precious time. Parents with kidlets are condemned to inch their way around town, searching for elusive elements of family togetherness, or at least momentarily appeasing a rush of sprog demands with *Ghostbusters* T-shirts and movies. Uninspired youth roam the streets looking for something to do and someone to do it to. Shoppers dive into the melee of department store sales to save money they will be repaying Bankcard for the rest of the year. People sick of sweltering in arid outer suburbs will brave Parramatta Road on their way to Bondi, where they will go insane looking for a parking space and be so desperate to cool off, they won't mind swimming in a sea of sewage.

Normally, Hyde Park is the pleasant city lunchtime refuge of office workers, who do their bit for conservation by admiring the smog through the trees and sharing their sandwiches with the pigeons. None of them would be caught dead here during the month of January, and for good reason. For Hyde Park is packed with all aforementioned humanity locked in search of the spirit of Sydney Festival, something to eat, a way to keep the monkeys off their backs for a while and hopefully, for all the money they're spending, some free entertainment.

Clearly, Sydney suffers from an extended silly season which Big Brother decreed well before 1984 as being suitable entertainment for the masses. There is no escape. Though intelligent plebs could, for the same money they would blow in the Park, buy the kids a Monopoly set, hire a babysitter and take themselves off to the theatre. People on the dole can attend some Festival performance previews free, or pay concession rates equivalent to what they might spend getting into the Hoyts Airport or out of McDonalds, and still see a good show.

Having been to Hyde Park and tasted the tacos, I opted for a more civilised form of artifice and went to see Los Trios Ringbarkus in their *Outer Sink* show at the Footbridge.



"You mean...there's an audience out there?!"

PARANOIAS RINGBARKUS

SOMETHING about Ringbarkus has an hypnotic effect on their audiences. Many people leaving the theatre, when asked what the show was about, say: "I dunno. I spent two hours in a theatre where these two guys did some things and a lot of the time did nothing at all, and I laughed all the way."

Los Trios Ringbarkus base their act on classic paranoia — viz. *delusions of grandeur.* Last year, they planned on presenting an entire *Carmen.* This year, they bribed Nigel Triffit to direct their show ("reluctantly"), but, well... what Stephen and Neill have always wanted is to be involved in something magical, you know, "the Magic of Theatre?" And they've always wanted to do something just like Nigel Triffit's *Secrets.* How? Via Symbolism, Mysticism, and above all, *Journeys.* There must be Journeys. So, equipped with large and ancient Globites linked with a piece of rope so they won't float away, with plenty of fog billowing around for effect, Ringbarkus embark on their Journeys — which go something like this, in no particular order...

On a dark and stormy night, two men are standing by a road, hitchhiking, freezing. One produces a cigarette lighter to warm their hands, the Venetian blinds drop raggedly into the background and blackout figures appear to help the suitcases glide magically through the air. A Doors song, *(This Is) The End,* horrific chopper noises in synch with the rotating overhead fan — oh, we're in Saigon. Stephen and Neill are in beds which won't keep still. (Not surprising, this *is* Saigon after all.) The beds begin to slide around with alarming speed, and the boys must work fast to keep up with them.

What's in the suitcases? Well, there is Stephen's violin, and though it's practically stringless, it's still playable. . .sort of.

But there is a problem. The stagehands have gone off on smoko for ten minutes, so we'll just have to *wait* until they come back. Studied waiting before a captive audience gives way to fear and loathing, as they realise just where they are. Look, Stephen just happens to have brought along a packet of Jatz bikkies! His Jatz Stufferoo is the only part of the act he's been forced to retain from last year, and wil probably never be allowed to give up. Why are you laughing at him? Don't you realise how dangerous this act is? One tiny slip of the oesophagus and he could swallow the whole packet, and... actually choke to death right before your very eyes!

From here, it gets faster and funnier. There's Baby Jesus, banging Neill's head on the floor one hundred times, waiting again, *Outer Sink* with 200 flying saucers, the song *Cooking In The Kitchen,* total wreckage of the set and the Sydney Chainsaw Massacre. The horror of it all dawns on them as they end the show, apologising profusely for Everything — including the Sydney Festival.

Ah, but they do create illusions. How can people think they do nothing when they've been sweating like pigs from the beginning? And look, their tuxedos! Not in good shape to begin with, they're decidedly beyond repair. Ringbarkus are busy developing comedy into an artform all their own: at once simplistic, complex, gentle, maniacal and above all, involving. Synch into it...

LOVE FOR YOUR CONSUMPTION

IF YOU have a yen for a well-rounded play *not* based on relationships and set in some other time and place (probably Italy in the 1890s), there is *Zastrozzi* at the Nimrod (Seymour Centre) until February 23.

Written and directed by visiting Canadian writer George F. Walker, *Z* is appropriately casted with Colin Friels in the title role. Zastrozzi is the ultimate criminal of Europe, who (like Macbeth) fears no-one, will betray a friend with a kiss, turn crime into art and play with surrealistic philosophy — because, as everyone knows, he is perfectly sane.

Whatever projects Z is normally engaged in are suspended, because he seeks to avenge the murder of his mother. . . although you get the impression that his mother has become the least important element in this obsession to kill the culprit, Verezzi. Verezzi (James Laurie) would seem an unworthy opponent for the likes of Zastrozzi, because he is absolutely mad and totally unaware of his danger. While Verezzi is fulfilling himself as first a servant of God, then progressing to Messianic status in happy oblivion, his keeper (well-played by Neil Fitzpatrick) is frantically trying to save his life.

In contrast to Zastrozzi is his subordinate, Bernardo — just a dirty thug who kills, as Z. says, "without imagination". Another colourful character is Matilda (Tina Bursill), a fierce and beautiful criminal/Seductress Supreme who imagines herself the only counterpart worthy of Zastrozzi. But Z is not interested — he has his problems.

Zastrozzi's main problem is his nightmares — and this play could be a nightmare in his own life. Colin Friels really rips as he describes the worst nightmare, in which he is a 'Do-Gooder' who goes around wearing a stupid mask of a smile, which even as he speaks is brilliantly plastered on his face.

In such a way are we drawn into a shady, ill-defined world where our own values and the balance of good and evil are tossed aside at the whim of Zastrozzi. Surrealism becomes logic. This is finely illustrated in a touching scene shared by Zastrozzi and the virgin Julia (Anna Lee), whose cool, precise sensibility provides a counterpoint of light. They understand each other perfectly as they indulge in a purely imaginary sexual encounter.

But what is the relationship between the Hunter and the Prey? They say that the tiger feels love for the antelope he has caught as he devours it: this is the only form of love Zastrozzi can countenance, and as such, he's the curiously appropriate Patron of the Syd Fest.

DELUSIONS OF DAMAGE

THE CELL BLOCK Theatre is a good place to get away from Festival madness, to see a play which is *part* of it. Kathy Lette's *Wet Dreams* is premiering there, so if you go to see it, go early and put yourself into a nice space by wandering around the leafy old Gaol grounds in the summer dusk with a glass of wine in your hand.

Wet Dreams is described as a "wildly funny play about young Australian women in the 80s: their yearnings, dreams and confusions". Kathy Lette (ex Salami Sister) "assaults her audience with racy and sparkling dialogue packed with entendre and pun. But underneath the surface is a serious exploration of the delusions and hypocrisies contained in the stereotypes. . . a savage indictment of people who use each other without taking into account the damage both to them and themselves."

Most of that blurb is true: the sharp dialogue extracts a lot of laughs, but it is not a play without problems. *Wet Dreams* could do with some rewriting. The roles of the three young women sharing a house are over-taxing for the young and stage-inexperienced actresses. Lette has gone for every simile and adjective she could stuff into abundant invective for the women's lines — ultimately, they are depicted as *Cleo* feminists whose sole alternative to self-advancement sex is fear of cellulite. The men are also out for what they can get.

But it's a hard, bitter play for all the humour — I would hate to think you could take any six people from a city terrace house and fail to find one redeeming factor in any of them.

The two arch-bastards, Russell — wealthy businessman and an incredible dag (played by John Doyle) — and Gary, the disgustingly ocker family man relishing a bit on the side (played by Ned Manning) are what redeemed *Wet Dreams* for me. But the audience seemed to enjoy it, and it is the kind of play a bunch of friends can see, laugh at and have plenty to talk about afterwards.

"Er, sorry Neill..."

AUSTRALIA NOW CHARTZ MAINSTREAM JIVE

SINGLES

TF	LF	HP	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	—	1	**SCREAMING TRIBESMEN**	A Stand Alone	Citadel
2	—	2	**GANG GAJANG**	Gimme Some Lovin'	Mercury
3	—	3	**DIED PRETTY**	Mirror Blues	Citadel
4	1	1	**LIME SPIDERS**	Slave Girl	Citadel
5	—	5	**I'M TALKING**	Trust Me	Regular
6	—	6	**PRESIDENTS ELEVEN**	Summer Vacation	Sundown
7	2	2	**THE MODELS**	Big On Love	Mushroom
8	4	4	**CRYSTAL SET**	A Drop in The Ocean	Survival
9	—	9	**SHOWER SCENE FROM PSYCHO**	Caroline	Elvis
10	—	10	**ELEVEN ELEVEN**	Devastate Me	Eleven Eleven
11	3	1	**DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS**	Soul Kind Of Feeling	White
12	—	12	**LAUGHING CLOWNS**	Just Because I Like	HOT
13	6	6	**HUNTERS & COLLECTORS**	Throw Your Arms Around Me	White
14	—	14	**MENTAL AS ANYTHING**	Apocalypso	Regular
15	12	12	**THE APARTMENTS**	All You Wanted	HOT
16	18	16	**NON STOP DANCERS**	Shake This City	EMI
17	—	17	**PETE BEST BEATLES**	Alamein Train	Strine
18	—	18	**THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS**	Ocean Liner	HOT
19	—	19	**BER-DUM BER-DUM**	Love Potion No.XXX	Popworld
20	—	20	**OLYMPIC SIDEBURNS**	13th Floor	Strine

TF	LF	TI		
1	2	4	**BAND AID PROJECT**	Do They Know It's Xmas? (POL)
2	1	9	**MADONNA**	Like A Virgin (WEA)
3	10	5	**WHAM!**	Last Xmas (CBS)
4	3	20	**RAY PARKER Jnr.**	Ghostbusters (FES)
5	4	7	**CHAKA KHAN**	I Feel For you (WEA)
6	13	7	**STYLE COUNCIL**	Shout To The Top (POL)
7	12	6	**THE HONEYDRIPPERS**	Sea Of Love (WEA)
8	19	8	**MORODER/OAKEY**	(Together In) Electric Dreams (CBS)
9	7	17	**STEVIE WONDER**	I Just Called... (RCA)
10	16	6	**PAT BENATAR**	We Belong (FES)
11	5	9	**BILLY OCEAN**	Caribbean Queen (EMI)
12	25	5	**FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**	Power Of Love (FES)
13	14	8	**HALL AND OATES**	Out Of Touch (RCA)
14	8	10	**TIME BANDITS**	Only Shooting Love (CBS)
15	11	11	**WHAM!**	Freedom (CBS)
16	6	9	**DURAN DURAN**	Wild Boys (EMI)
17	9	14	**DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS**	Soul Kinda Feeling (FES)
18	17	8	**SADE**	Smooth Operator (CBS)
19	—	1	**FOREIGNER**	I Know What Love Is (WEA)
20	—	1	**EURYTHMICS**	Sex Crime (RCA)

ALBUMS

TF	LF	HP	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	—	1	**WET TAXIS**	From The Archives	HOT
2	1	1	**MIDNIGHT OIL**	Red Sails In The Sunset	CBS
3	—	3	**SACRED COWBOYS**	We Love You	Manmade
4	—	4	**DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS**	Live	White
5	7	5	**LAUGHING CLOWNS**	History Of Rock'n'Roll	HOT
6	—	6	**THE SUNNYBOYS**	Live	Mushroom
7	—	7	**I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVY**	St. Kilda's Alright	Manmade
8	—	8	**STRANGE TENANTS**	Movin' In	Bluebeat
9	19	9	**LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS**	Tales From The Unexpected	HOT
10	—	10	**PAINTERS & DOCKERS**	Love Planet	Big Time
11	—	11	**VARIOUS**	No Worries	HOT
12	—	12	**VARIOUS**	Eat Your Head	Greville
13	—	13	**THE GO-BETWEENS**	Springhill Fair	Sire
14	—	14	**AUSTRALIAN CRAWL**	Crawl File	EMI
15	5	1	**CORPSE GRINDERS**	Corpse Grinders	Manmade
16	—	16	**VARIOUS**	Punter to Punter	Strine
17	—	17	**VARIOUS**	Kicks	Raven
18	—	18	**COLD CHISEL**	Barking Spiders — Live '83	WEA
19	2	2	**VARIOUS**	Not So Humdrum	Abberrant
20	4	1	**VARIOUS**	Asleep At The Wheel	AuGoGo

TF	LF	TI		
1	1	7	**MADONNA**	Like A Virgin (WEA)
2	3	9	**WHAM!**	Make It Big (CBS)
3	6	20	**JULIO IGLESIAS**	1100 Bel Air Place (CBS)
4	4	12	**SADE**	Diamond Life (CBS)
5	5	12	**MIDNIGHT OIL**	Red Sails in The Sunset (CBS)
6	2	7	**AUSTRALIAN CRAWL**	Crawl File (EMI)
7	7	31	**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**	Born in The USA (CBS)
8	20	67	**BILLY JOEL**	An Innocent Man (CBS)
9	10	24	**TINA TURNER**	Private Dancer (FES)
10	8	5	**BARKING SPIDERS**	Barking Spiders Live 1983 (WEA)
11	11	9	**RICHARD CLAYDERMAN**	Memories (WEA)
12	16	7	**HONEYDRIPPERS**	Honeydrippers Vol. 1 (WEA)
13	9	7	**ALISON MOYET**	Alf (CBS)
14	12	14	**VARIOUS ARTISTS**	Ghostbusters Soundtrack (FES)
15	13	12	**U2**	Unforgettable Fire (FES)
16	15	7	**FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**	Welcome To The Pleasuredome (FES)
17	21	6	**PAT BENATAR**	Tropico (FES)
18	17	6	**HALL AND OATES**	Big Bam Boom (RCA)
19	18	10	**BARBRA STREISAND**	Emotion (CBS)
20	14	9	**DURAN DURAN**	Arena (EMI)

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SEEN & HEARD

■ RECORDS ■ GIGS ■ MOVIES ■ BOOKS

LOU REED
(Sydney Entertainment Centre)

If Lou Reed's current set-list boasts few surprises the vibrancy and muscularity of the performances themselves is an unexpected delight. The diffidence of last year's *A Night With Lou Reed* video was nowhere in sight as he burst into the inevitable *Sweet Jane,* with Robert Quine pumping out those classic chords as if they had just been invented, and the crowd erupting in elated anticipation.

The new, healthy Lou may be a fairly abstemious fellow, but he's lost none of his old mordant wit. *Waiting For The Man* was introduced as "an old song which tells you about the effect of inflation", and despite numerous devaluing cover versions, the original article is still exciting.

Many of the newer songs (from *The Blue mask, Legendary Hearts* and the recent *New Sensations*) are quite simply not as good (rhythmically, melodically *or* lyrically) as vintage Reed, but what they lack in substance they make up for in freshness. *Legendary Hearts* had an unsettling pathos and resonance lacking in the maudlin studio version, while *My Red Joystick* was carefree, breezy and amiably lightweight. "I waited till disco was dead to write it," Reed explained, "so no-one could accuse me of being trendy." (So what about *Disco Mystic* from *The Bells,* I ask myself?)

There was plenty more in this sort of bright, ingenuous vein, ranging from the irresistibly positive single *I Love You Suzanne* (check out Reed's dancing on the clip before you call him mellowed-out again!) to a climactic, thunderous *New Sensations.* This ode to the joys of motor-cycle riding was followed by the more city-slick *Doin' The Things That We Want To,* replete with piano accordion and a rather banal spoken tribute to fellow N.Y. visionaries like Scorsese and Sam Shepard. The audience lapped it up as if they were local heroes.

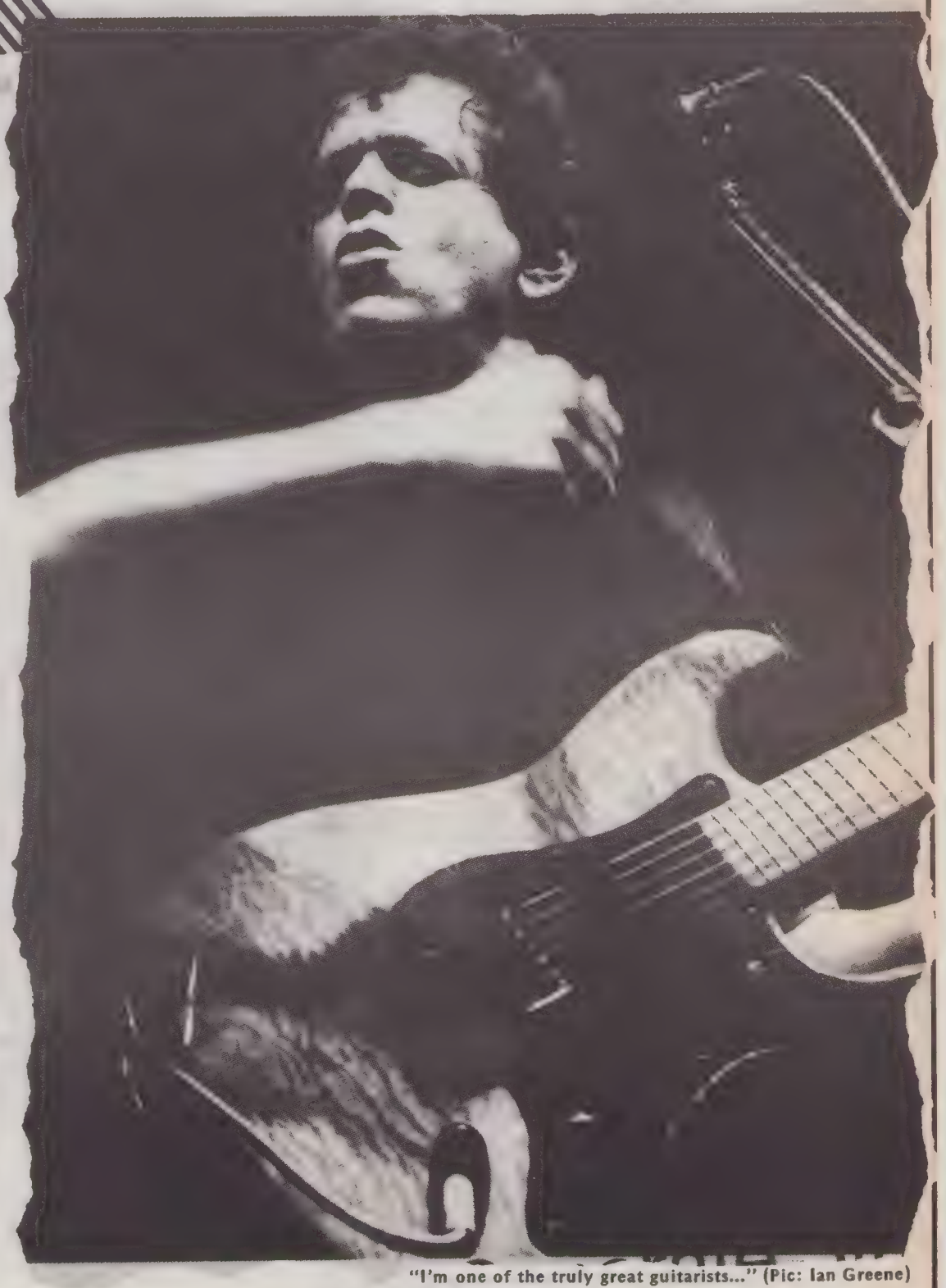
The real acclaim was, of course, reserved for the old standards, and rightly so. Quine's breakneck guitar on *White Light/White Heat* recalled (of all things) Dave Edmunds' *Sabre Dance* with Love Sculpture, even if Reed's subsequent "thank you — you've been one of the truly great audiences" patter rang a little hollow. Such bonhomie is a little suspect from someone who refused point-blank to talk to the media. Give me the old "why don'tcha start clapping, ya little motherfuckers" persona any day.

But let's not be churlish. . .*Walk On The Wild Side* was enlivened both by Reed's dancing and Peter Wood's shimmering, tinkly piano work, and *Satellite Of Love* rose to an unexpectedly raucous peak. The night's unquestionable highlight was, however, the Velvets' *There She Goes Again,* whose intro Reed belatedly admitted "swiping" from Marvin Gaye's *Hitchhike.* Impossibly fast, raw — the adjectives are apt, but they can't do justice. It was great.

As for the encores, there was a definite sense of anti-climax as the band moved formulaically through *Coney Island Baby, Waves Of Fear* (the horrific 'scary story' from *The Blue Mask*), and of course, *Rock And Roll.* After such a rich and exciting infusion of music, some sort of come-down was perhaps inevitable, but in any event the sleep-walking was short-lived. Halfway through *Rock And Roll* the assembled company sprang to life, Reed delivered a curious impromptu rave about James Brown, and the song billowed out to a clamourous, happy conclusion.

Lou Reed's best work *may* be behind him, but then the standards he set were extraordinarily high. By almost anyone else's, he remains incomparable.

MARK DEMETRIUS



"I'm one of the truly great guitarists..." (Pic: Ian Greene)

BRONSKI BEAT
The Age Of Consent
(PolyGram)

Why do I feel that criticising this album is like criticising a way of life? Because I've been backed into a corner by it, that's why! From the little pink triangles on the cover to the last grooves in the vinyl, this is an ideologically pure album. It's gay without the sleaze, radical yet shrinkwrapped and packaged for general family consumption. It is the acceptable face of homosexuality, sitting up and demanding to be noticed.

It's fortunate then that there isn't too much criticising to be done. The most interesting thing about this debut is the duality of its heritage. There are two distinct musical periods that Bronski Beat both plunder and augment — the first is the 40s musical, represented here by a cover of the Gershwin brothers' *Ain't Necessarily So,* featuring a host of cellos and a very mellow clarinet solo. It ebbs and flows with just the right amount of calculated luxuriousness. The Bronskis' contributions to the genre are *No More War* and *Heatwave,* which has the novel touch of a tap dancer keeping the beat in the background. *Heatwave* is so effective, I could have sworn I'd heard it as part of some long-forgotten film soundtrack — only the images remain.

The second, more obvious influence is (dare I say it?) disco music, now legitimised and referred to as Dance or Club music, or Hi-Energy. It doesn't make much difference what you call it; influences like this are hard to hide. And they become impossible to hide when you consider that the album's finale is a cover of Donna Summer's *I Feel Love.* There has been talk of removing the song from the record as a protest against Ms Summer, who has been frothing at the mouth of late with such sensitive polemic as: "AIDS is God's retribution for homosexuals." Thankfully the song remains, for much as I can't bring myself to actually like it, it does fit in well with the rest of the trio's material.

Jimi Somerville is the key to the album —it is his voice that is its most impressive and enduring aspect. That occasionally trembly falsetto communicates such a range of emotions, from the poignancy and sadness of *Smalltown Boy* to the frustrated anger of *Why?* If you take Jimi's voice away from the project, there's not a lot left — the other two thirds of Bronski Beat are adequate, though hardly inspiring. Their synthesiser and percussion work is simplistic, and lacks variety.

Though only four of the ten tracks are out-and-out love songs, *The Age Of Consent* absolutely drips with sexuality. Or more to the point, it gives the impression of dripping with sexuality. The fact that as listeners, most of us are aware from the beginning that we are hearing a different sexual viewpoint, must surely colour our perceptions. In fact, with the one exception of *Need A Man Blues,* the sexual perspective of this album is ambivalent, at least on paper. The only tangible difference in these love songs is that they're sung by men, and about men. Big deal!

Indeed, it's when the Bronskis get away from the subject of love that the problems set in. *Love And Money* and *Junk* are eminently disposable songs, and the unbelievable banality of *No More War* is exceeded only by Culture Club's own *War Song: 'No more war please/No more destruction of innocent life/No more living in fear/No more on our bended knees/To live is our right.'*

But for all my quibbling, *The Age Of Consent* is a promising album. In places it sounds rushed, as if the ploy was to get an album out as quickly as possible to capitalise on the vibe. Now it's proved successful, expect a more crafted, focused Bronski Beat on the next one.

JON CASIMIR

JULIAN LENNON
Valotte
(Charisma)

Boy. . . you gotta carry that weight. And, for a young man whose aspirations for the moment don't stretch beyond being a pleasant pop diversion, that weight must seem pretty awesome. Oh, for the anonymity of a simple name like Beethoven or O'Dowd.

Still, Charisma have shown rare sensitivity and dignity in launching the young Lennon. . . and the hit single, *Too Late For Goodbyes,* in fact turns out to be one of the lesser tracks.

Uncomfortably twee and not a little vacuous, *Too Late For Goodbyes* isn't a bad decoy to fend off the curiosity factor, but is hardly indicative of the guy's potential for a long-term career. The attractively ebullient *Say You're Wrong,* the funky *Okay For You,* the more intricate *Valotte* and the powerful *Jesse* (the one song on the album not written by Julian) all tell a drastically different story.

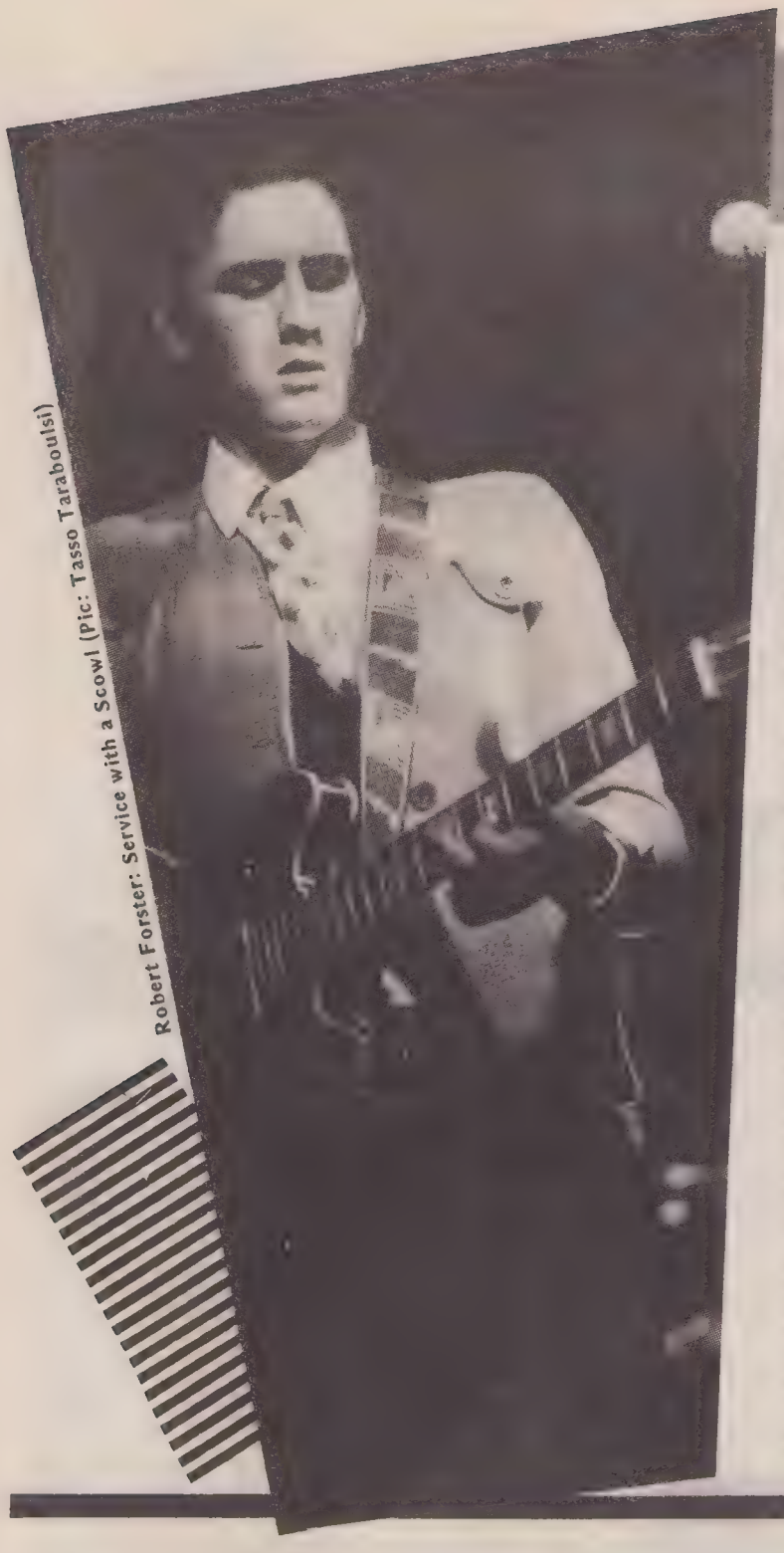
It would be irresponsible to suggest that this is anything other than an agreeable but flyweight pop album. Yet while he might have been better advised to have shopped around a bit for his material, the main criticisms are production ones. Phil Ramone has invested Julian with polish and unrelenting immaculacy, but he may not have been the best choice for an album in dire need of some dirt.

Comparisons with John Lennon circa '74 are so obvious anyway — and Julian can hardly be blamed for sounding like his old man — that a livelier, more modern sound is needed to lift it.

However, Julian inherited his father's pungent voice to such an acute degree that it's safe to assume he's also inherited some of the wit and wisdom. In which case it shouldn't be too long before he comes up with material a lot more striking and original than this. When he does, he'll look back on his as a friendly if slightly anaemic opening shot.

For now he's reached first base intact. In the circumstances that itself is no small miracle.

COLIN IRWIN



Robert Forster: Service with a Scowl (Pic: Tasso Taraboulsi)

THE GO-BETWEENS
(The Club, Melbourne)

The fear in anticipation of the Go-Betweens was whether they would live up to expectation. Were the superlative reviews from English critics justified? They were, and a fairly unresponsive audience approached them with a caution which the band seemed to positively revel in.

Quite simply, the Go-Betweens are brilliant. How few bands there are who make music as different, true and beautiful as this, and write songs of such fierce intimacy and unsparing honesty (Grant McLennan and Robert Forster, it is not extravagant to say, are among the very best songwriters around worldwide). It was indeed as Grant McLennan pointed out at the beginning of the set with endearing and entirely justified arrogance — "You're lucky to be here tonight" — a privilege to see them.

They started with their two best songs, the now classic *Cattle And Cane* by McLennan and *Part Company* by Forster — the latter from their most recent and best album, *Spring Hill Fair.* The older material was fairly evenly interspersed with the bulk of the new album, and the balance was carried through in the swapping of lead vocals and lead guitar between the two songwriters. Like the difference between their songwriting styles, Grant's guitar work is generally lyrical and liquid while Robert's is harder and more abrasive. The styles both contrast each other, yet weave together with a marvellous seeming ease.

The set built from a slightly laconic beginning, including the lovely new single *Bachelor Kisses* — "a slow one but a true one" — and thence to the autobiographic *Cattle And Cane, Unkind And Unwise,* further to the damning harshness of *Five Words* (McLennan's most didactic lyric to date, an indictment of organised religion). Though there were many great moments, a particular highpoint was *Man O'Sand to Girl O'Sea* with its head-turning chord progressions. By comparison with the live version, the recorded song seems only half-realised.

Very little encouragement was needed to call the band back for a couple of encores, the best of which was the desolate *Draining The Pool.* The final song, McLennan's bleak *River of Money* — "a song about money, greed, lust, loneliness, deprivation, isolation; in other words it's funny" — with its largely spoken lyric utterly flummoxed the audience. The loping rhythm of Robert Vickers' always excellent bass and the laid-back feel of Lindy Morrison's drumming at the song's beginning built to unimaginable confusion and hilarious near-chaos. (The whole set in a nutshell, as it were.) Forster (who farewelled the audience and left the stage three times during the course of the song) and McLennan engaged in a guitar battle (who could strum faster?), sank to their knees in glorious parody of 'real' guitarists; Grant brought out an harmonica and blew a bit, did some slide-guitar work and Forster indulged in some self-conscious and one feels slightly formularized guitar histrionics (what you can do with a fuzz-box and an amplifier if you put your mind to it!).

The Go-Betweens are much more relaxed and energetic, even raucous, after their time OS, but the energy is still fairly introspective. While Robert Forster in particular invited audience response, in fact there was not much genuine communication. If one's eyes met Grant's for instance, he looked quickly away; Robert Vickers, who doodles around the stage in a world entirely his own, tongue literally in cheek, half-smiled; Robert Forster scowled; only Lindy Morrison looked into and smiled at, rather than over or through the crowd.

How much longer will the Go-Betweens be around? If you have the chance, don't miss them — but don't be *too* enthusiastic.

LUCY TRELOAR

MADONNA
Like A Virgin (Sire)

Madonna's debut album had been around for some months before the world succumbed to its singular allure. Full of potential hit singles, it oozed cool, sensuous melodies and swirling rhythms — not to mention the innocently seductive charms of Madonna herself. She came on like a breath of fresh air — all ingenuousness and knowing naivete. An only slightly tarnished streetgirl, her own persona was as important a part of the package as the music itself.

On this coyly titled follow-up, there's much more of the tease, of the coquette, to Madonna's box of tricks. She is in fact more unlike a virgin than ever. While the first album (produced by Reggie Lucas, who also worked on the Models' *Big On Love*) was somewhat one-dimensional, at least it was nearly always successful. *Like A Virgin*, with Nile Rodgers at the helm, attempts far more but doesn't always connect. Songs like *Shoo-Bee-Doo* and *Stay* for example are somewhat perfunctory, and no amount of production wizardry can make them more than what they are.

Rodgers brings in his usual assortment of session musicians and production ploys — most of the time, Madonna is singing in front of what is virtually a reformed version of Chic. And you know that can't be bad. Turn *Material Girl* or *Like A Virgin* (the song) up really loud, and you can literally *feel* their relentless rhythms.

However, the masterstroke here is when Madonna moves furthest away from her usual territory. It's a version of Rose Royce's 1978 hit, *Love Don't Live Here Anymore*. Swathed in real strings for a change, it sounds like the perfect mid-70s ballad — something to listen to after Dorothy Moore's *Misty Blue*.

Surely this should be the next single. It'd change the public's perception of Madonna as having little else to peddle besides her sex appeal, and there's definitely far more to her than that.

FRANK BRUNETTI

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But if that sounds a little heavy, it's quite OK to bend the rules by mixing El Toro Tequila with whatever turns you on . . . for just a tap, instead of a kick.
So lick, sip, suck . . . or mix, El Toro Tequila.
Fully imported from Mexico.
And that's no bull.

Sunrise
(El Toro, Grenadine & Orange.)
Pour 1½ oz El Toro into a tall glass over ice cubes. Add a dash of Grenadine. Fill with orange juice and stir.

Te-Cola
Pour 1½ oz El Toro over ice, into a tall glass. Fill to top with Coca-Cola. Stir. Garnish with lemon or lime.
Tee-rific!

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El Toro Tequila — another fine product imported by Continental Distillers

SEEN & HEARD

GENERAL PUBLIC ...All The Rage (Virgin)

Two years ago, the Beat emerged from the studio with what turned out to be their third and final album, *Special Beat Service*. Already categorised as a spent force, the flavour of last month, the Beat album had no chance with the fickle English press. They largely ignored a collection of exquisite highs that finally (effectively) showcased the honey-coated voice of one Dave Wakeling — one of the best vocalists to show his tonsils on the recording scene for decades. Not previously extended, his talents capped some beautiful songs, particularly *I Confess* and *End Of The Party*.

Eight months later, in the same week as old stablemate Terry Hall did the exact same thing to the Fun Boy Three, Dave Wakeling and co-vocalist Ranking Roger brought their procrastination to an end by dissolving the band. Ironically, the Beat went out on their first British Top Five Hit for a couple of years — *Can't Get Used To Losing You*.

Dave and Roger — not content to rest on their meagre royalties — set about forming a new band, which, neither really by intention nor desire, turns out to be something of a midlands supergroup: Micky Billingham on keyboards, Andy 'Stoker' Growcott on drums (both ex-Dexy's Midnight Runners), Horace Panter from the Specials on bass, and a guest guitarist in the form of one Mick Jones, ex-Clash. Kevin White has since been added as a permanent axe-person.

Unsurprisingly, it all sounds somewhat like the Beat in places. Saxa, the venerable saxophonist who graced early Beat work, pops up again on *Hot You're Cool* to prove: 1) he hasn't lost his touch; and 2) old saxplayers don't even fade away, let alone die. Beat parallels exist here in song structure and in delivery, but when it comes to pinning down the actual sounds, most of this sounds nothing like that band at all.

It's a well-balanced album, skipping from bouncy songs about love — like *Tenderness, Never You Done That, Are You Leading Me On?* and *Where's The Line?* — to more concerned subjects in *Anxious, Burning Bright, As A Matter Of Fact,* and *Day To Day*.

Are You Leading Me On? holds a neat surprise, with the mystery lover turning out to be male in the last line. A lot of Wakeling's lyrics deal with the building and shattering of expectations. Consider this: *'All the time my mouth was saying no/My heat was screaming... no no no' (Never You Done That).* And there I was just about to scream yes. You weren't?

Undoubtedly, *Burning Bright* is the highpoint of the album. With a crashing, snarling sound, it's a million years away from the Beat. The tune first appeared as the instrumental B-side of *General Public*, then titled *Dishwasher*. It's now been reworked, and shows the band at their heaviest.

With such a wealth of experience to draw from there are no weak links in... *All The Rage*. Micky's keyboards form a lot of the substance of the sound, working away subtly behind the bravado. Stoker shows you don't have to play heavy metal to hit your drums hard, and Dave's twisted wordplay is still very much in evidence. And Roger still indulges in a little toasting, etc.

From H block to Springbok, from Moscow to Monterey, Maine to Mexico, ... *All The Rage* is a fine album. Without contriving it, General Public have forged a sound of their own — with just the barest hints of their previous activities. Full marks to them.

JON CASIMIR

PUBLIC IMAGE LTD./ THE MOODISTS/BOX OF FISH

(Hordern Pavilion, Sydney)

" I mean it most fucking sincerely!" (Pic: Tom Takacs)

For many of the thousands of people who crammed into the Hordern, the coming of John Rotten was to be a sort of ceremonial consummation — the legitimisation of their faith in punk, and in John himself. There was no doubt — everyone *wanted* it to be great, and not just great, but history-making. Though it's probably not the way most of the people would put it, everyone wanted it to be the sort of gig to remember in ten years' time, to drop casually at early 1990s parties; "Oh yes, the PiL tour. . . '84, wasn't it? I remember that. Frightfully good, wasn't it? Pass the canapes please." John couldn't be disappointing; we couldn't afford him to be. If he was to be so, then all those adolescent memories would need to be reshuffled and reappraised to accommodate his fallibility.

Not surprisingly, the audience consisted mainly of people in their early twenties — old enough to remember punk from their mid teens, when they were young enough to be really affected by it.

For me, attending a PiL show was inherently masochistic. I realised as I sat down that I wanted to be abused (Well, not me *personally*). I wanted him to flex his verbal muscles, to exercise a bit of that famous wit and spite. After all, it doesn't hurt, and there's no malice in it — this is showbiz, isn't it? Just a game. And whether he would like to admit it or not, at bottom line John Lydon is an entertainer. Luckily for him (and for us) he is a good one, and the Hordern show was excellent.

Proving that concerts can occasionally start almost on time, BOX OF FISH arrived on stage shortly after eight o'clock. The classic incarnation of the phrase "angst-ridden", their grinding tuneless noise grunged its way through an eight-song set. So *this* is what punk has spawned, I thought to myself, and elected to watch their lightshow instead. Very arty it was too, with swirls of colours, slide projections, and scenes from silent movies. Unfortunately, I couldn't read the subtitles, so it was back to watching the band. "That singer's been frightened by Nick Cave, hasn't he?" said the guy next to me, and I was forced to agree as the 'singer' in question let out another anguished whoop, or was it a squeal that time? Perhaps they should try varying the tempo of their material a little more. From where I was sitting, it was all a bit too samey. Oh, and I'm sure one of their basslines was ripped off from the incidental music in *Monkey*. . .

A short break, and then returning heroes THE MOODISTS took the stage. Now I admit to not having seen or heard much of the Moodists before, but they impressed me greatly. They cover a lot of the same ground as have many other early 1980s bands, but theirs is an intelligent and evolving style. Their ponderous basslines are overlaid with ratchety guitar — one minute lurching, the next stabbing.

The lights dimmed, the audience tensed, and the obligatory fog dawdled out, covering the stage and the first few rows of the audience. For a while we all stood in the dark waiting for something to happen. The strains of *Order Of Death* crept out of the PA, but no-one could see anything. Ah, hang on, this is the album version! They're not playing at all! More waiting. One by one the band had taken the stage, but where was John? Jebin held a note on his keyboard for what seemed like ages, and then John just sauntered on from stage right. Overwhelming applause.

Bad Life and *Solitaire*, both from *This Is What You Want. . . This Is What You Get*, kicked off the gig in a big way. Any doubts about the quality of recent PiL material were quickly dispelled — John's "new form of white dance music" turned out to be as effective as it is individual, and the crowd bounced and swayed en masse. Almost paradoxically, the band were exceptionally tight, and the sound mix was absolutely superb. The astonishing thing is that John's voice is exactly the same live as it is on vinyl — every word, every inflection is clear.

At most concerts, fans wait till the end of the night before invading the stage. At PiL, they were trying from the outset. From the first few bars of *Bad Life*, they were hurling themselves suicidally at the barrel-chested security men. Those at the head of the audience who couldn't get past the brickheads satisfied themselves by spitting in adoration. . . There was a time back in the 70s when gobbing meant "Hi! How're you doing? Great show!" Times change.

"Now, a word of advice to all you cheap cunts down the front spitting. It is old-fashioned and *has been done before!*" John stalks and clowns around the stage, an unintentional parody of those 15-kilometres-a-show stars like Mick Jagger. Lydon merely walks from side to side; he is aware that he doesn't have to do much. His stage presence is nothing short of phenomenal, and all eyes are upon him. Here and there, he flails an arm or half-heartedly starts a jerky dance, only to give it up seconds later. He is in total control.

Through *Low Life* and *Memories*, the fans attempted the stage-climb in ever-increasing numbers, much to the chagrin of the security, who crouched maori-like across the front of the stage, repelling the climbers with simple, violent effectiveness. "OK, now take it calmer for a few songs and the security won't be so paranoid," John glared, putting himself in the good books. Anyone who vents his spleen at bouncers can't be all bad — it's also a guarantee of instant audience popularity. "Shoulda been a politician," he laughed to himself.

With one problem solved he turned to the other, especially as the gobbers continued to send their little messages stagewards during *Where Are You* and *1981*. "I warned you about gobbing. One more and I might just walk off. . . If someone next to you is gobbing, dosh him one. I mean that most fucking sincerely. This boy is no-one's spittoon!" (At the end of the next song, he walked to the front of the stage, eyed off the worst offender, and returned the compliment.)

Religion, one of the band's best and most popular songs brought big shouts of approval from the audience. John disappeared and returned with a fluorescent halo, which he held over his head, allowing it to slowly droop until it hung around his neck. Something of a lapsed anti-Christ, I suppose. Meanwhile, the sticky problems continued through *Annalisa*. "There will be no encore because of you dirty little bastards down the front. Beat them up at your pleasure," he directed at the rest of the crowd.

John had inferred that the band would probably play the odd Sex Pistols number, but I don't think anyone was prepared for *Bodies*. This crowd, hitherto just fanatical, became awestruck — I swear I felt the whole pavilion move, as people danced well up into the seated areas.

Instead of simply finishing and leaving after just ten songs, John stayed on stage amidst a flood of white light, singling out audience members and waving to them. "Thank you for being so kind. . . Well, I might just do another one. It all depends on how loud you shout," he teased.

A few minutes later, they were back. *Tie Me To The Length Of That* and *Chant* were fantastic — particularly the latter, a full-on, fire breathing attack. John was singing like the proverbially possessed.

"One more? Well, we'll make it really *long!" This Is Not A Love Song*, last year's "big" hit, was a helluva lot better live than on vinyl, and doubly exciting. "Now I want all the nice little boys and girls to sing along with Johnny." The song finished. The lights went up. John blew kisses to the audience and walked off again.

Once the applause had graduated to an acceptable level of stamping and screaming he returned, this time armed with a bottle of champagne. So much for the spitters, he thought to himself, as he sprayed it over the first few rows. *Flowers Of Romance* thudded out of the PA, its quirky drumbeat inspiring everyone to dance. And then? You guessed it! At one hundred miles an hour, a furious version of *Anarchy in the UK* rounded off the night. Hearing *Anarchy* and *Bodies* made it obvious just how surely John Rotten *WAS* the Sex Pistols. Seven years later, there is as much authentic venom in their delivery as there ever was. So *Anarchy* dissolved into the chant of *This Is What You Want. . . This Is What You Get*, which in turn became a quick reprise of *Chant*.

"Now, you bastards, BUY MY ALBUM!"

No-one could have let the Hordern disappointed. PiL were everything they'd promised and more. For those of us with an adolescence on the line, our choice of hero was well and truly vindicated.

JON CASIMIR

FLIX

DUNE

Directed by David Lynch
Starring Kyle MacLachlan, Francesca Annis, Sting

Dune is the story of a global revolution set eight thousand years in the future — the book is over four hundred pages long. The movie is a sketch, a mere outline that tries to condense every element of the story into two and a quarter hours. Take away half an hour for the inevitable action scenes (which don't advance the plot to any great degree) and the director is left with one and three quarter hours in which to explain the social, political, religious and demographic effects of its centrepiece, the spice (melange), which turns its user's eyes into blue-within-blue orbs and confers other powers besides.

Giant sandworms (up to four hundred metres long) are the source of the spice, and the main attraction of the movie. They have big teeth and are suitably mean, but what do they eat on the waterless desert planet?

Over the millenia, melange has mutated the Guild navigators and allows them to teleport *anywhere* in the universe without moving. Why, then, have spaceships at all? Why not just get the navigators to transport you to the bus stop nearest the place you want to go on the planet of your choice, instead of orbit around that planet?

Because the navigators control space travel, they control the known universe. But they don't control Dune — Baron Harkonen controls Dune, but he is controlled by Emperor Shaddam IV, who is controlled by the navigators. Confused? You will be. . .

Anyway, the overweight, floating Baron has a wild skin disease and a predilection for male adolescents, whose cartoid arteries he unplugs as he rapes them; so their precious red protein squirts out, amusing the whole court. Ha ha! Of course in the next scene, when the hero's mum and dad make love, it's all soft lights, tender whispers, complementary colours and missionary position.

The Baron's home planet is black, naturally. Is it composed of Manganese Oxide or Prime Evil ooze? Good and Evil, man.

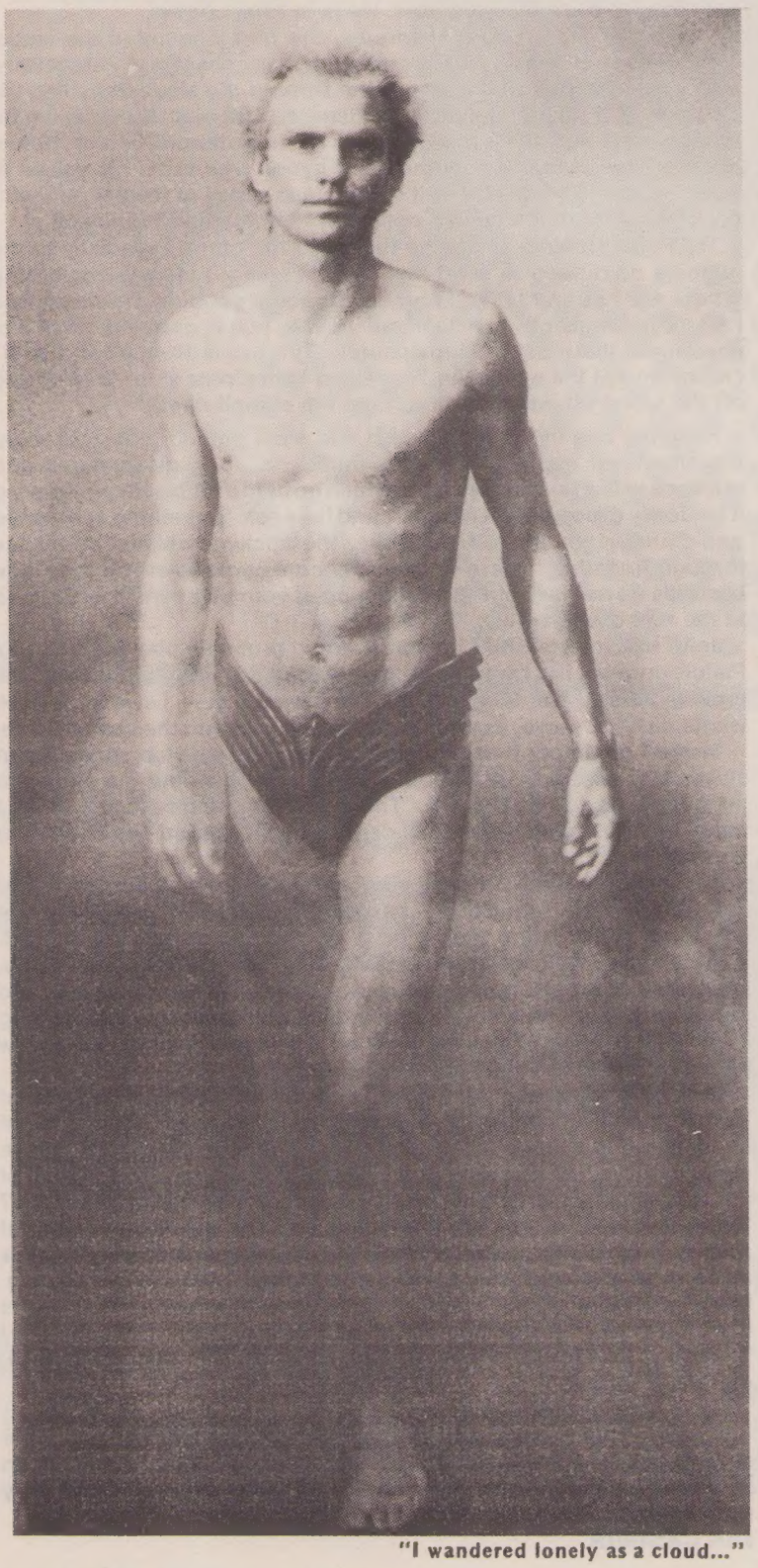
The cards are on the table and the stake is the desert planet — Dune, Arrakas. Paul Atreides (Muad 'dib) ingests the spice essence which has killed all other males who dared before him. He has crazy hallucinations, realises he is God, convinces the desert tribes (Fremen) he is God, rides a giant sandworm into town, takes over the planet, has a knife fight with Feyd (Sting) and kills him. It rains. Wow! It rains on a planet that has never had precipitation before. Wow! Muad 'dib is truly God! All the goodies smile; they were on the right side when things looked bad during all the killing and maiming.

This movie was billed as Science Fiction, but Space Opera is more applicable. Or maybe it's just a cleverly disguised spaghetti western with oddballs. It's not the right stuff, that's for sure. Even the special effects are played for laughs.

How cheap can you get for a forty million dollar cinematic adaptation of one of the most highly regarded SF novels of the sixties? The producer, De Laurentis seems to have spent all the money on elaborate costumes, sets, special effects and extras, and had none left over to pay a decent scriptwright who had a knowledge of and respect for good SF.

SF is the fiction of ideas. The reader's imagination provides the special effects; and at pulp magazine rates it comes much cheaper than the three hundred thousands odd dollars a minute this movie cost to make. Save your money and read the book; you ought to be able to pick it up for about two bucks secondhand.

JOHN PAUPERIS



"I wandered lonely as a cloud..."

LLOYD COLE AND THE COMMOTIONS
Rattlesnakes
(Polydor)

It only took about two listens to convince me that Lloyd Cole's *Perfect Skin*, with its clever lyrics and a sound that touched on bases ranging from Lou Reed to the Byrds, was one of the all-time great pop songs. I anxiously awaited more from Cole and his Commotions, yet another band from Scotland — the country that gave us Orange Juice, Simple Minds, Aztec Camera and a whole stack of other greats.

Forest Fire (the second single) is a much more accurate indication of what *Rattlesnakes*, Cole's debut album, is all about. It's a record that's short on irresistible, jangly pop songs, specialising as it does in attempts to unfurl its glories in the silkily seductive manner of *Forest Fire*. On occasion, as on *Speedboat*, the two approaches are combined with rewarding results.

Cole's skills as a lyricist are considerable, and far outweigh his more limited abilities as a tunesmith. These songs are full of witty asides and esoteric references to movies, books and other songs. *Speedboat* features the wonderful couplet: *'Some say they OD'ed on Leonard Cohen/I see that river whenever I think about them'*. The melodies however are far more minimal.

When it all comes together, as on the glorious *Mission Street*, the results are breathtaking. Acoustic guitars and strings wrap themselves lovingly around lyrics that are funny on one level, yet genuinely moving on another. And when Cole's smoky tenor enunciates the gorgeous chorus — *'When you go down on your knees/Are you so hard to please?'* — one is left with no choice but to melt in capitulation.

Occasionally, he does let his literary leanings get the better of him. The scenario of the title track, an otherwise great song, is copped directly from Joan Didion's novel *Play It As It Lays*, and is uncredited to boot. The Dylanesque pastiche of *Four Flights Up* is another seam best left unmined. Yet there's so many good songs on *Rattlesnakes* — *Perfect Skin, Charlotte Street, Speedboat, Heartbroken, Down On Mission Street*, the title song — that this is mere nitpicking.

It's to Cole's credit that out of such a limited number of musical ideas, he's managed to make so accomplished an album. I await his future work with interest.

FRANK BRUNETTI

NOT DROWNING, WAVING
Another Pond
(Rampant)

Ambient music is a strangely misunderstood musical form. As powerful and involving as it is to some people, creating an all-encompassing environment (its desired effect), to other listeners it can be annoyingly minimalist and undynamic.

The modern era of Ambience has had many exponents; frontrunners include Erik Satie, who has recently been rediscovered and revered for his now hip piano works (*Trios Gymnopedies* of 1887 being the most popular and recognisable — and the most ripped off!). Brian Eno was first struck with the cultish appeal of circumjacence in the late 70s, beginning his seemingly endless series (there's more to come!) of Ambient records — which variously sounded to some like he'd either turned on a machine and gone out to lunch or spent a tortured night making apparently motionless linear drivel. Martin Denny cornered the Hawaiian market, and Vini Reilly — working under the guise of Durutti Column — combined guitar and anorexia to effect a kind of quasi-gothic ambience.

The secret of ambient music is that it can be played on both 3RRR-FM and 2CH *and* everything in between.

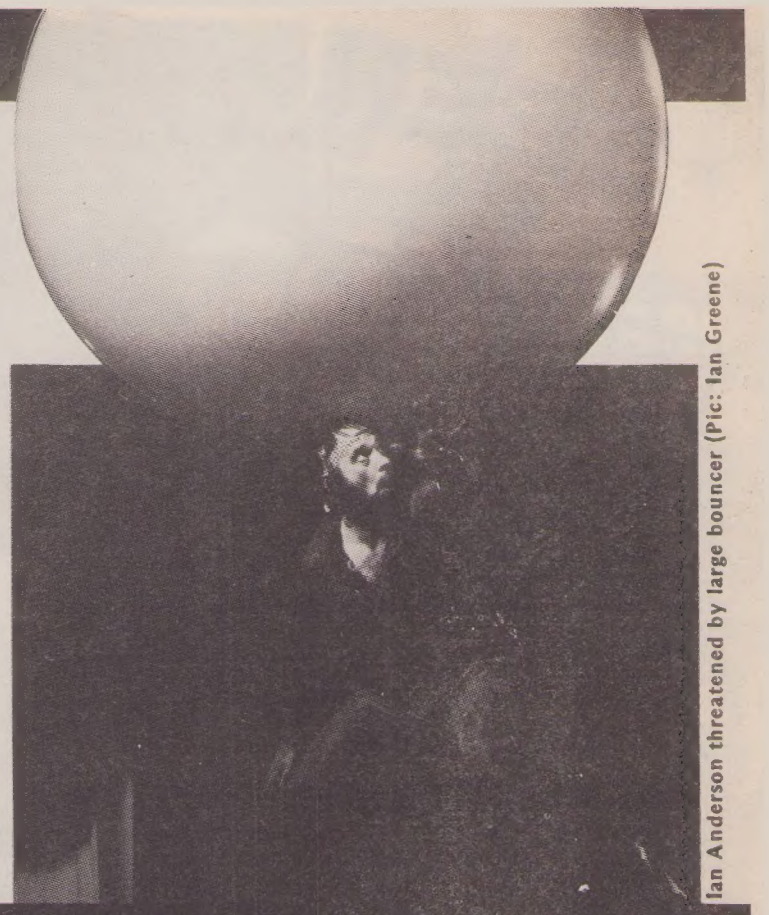
And so it is with Not Drowning, Waving's *Another Pond*. This record could be used with confidence in lifts, airports, for test patterns or meditation tapes. Because at its best, *Another Pond* captures a dynamic form of ambient sound that intertwines traditional impressionism with modern usage of piano and understated exploratory guitar. It displays alternatively sombre and vibrant ambience, it fairly *confuses* the idea of ambience, destroys, rebuilds and stretches its boundaries. Featured here are two distinct styles, executed with similarly disparate results.

The instrumentals (featuring the lead piano of David Bridie, subtly backed by the bass or guitar of John Phillips) are powerful and strong, yet understated. Tracks like the standout, *Water Drops*, are an expression of tenderness come to life with the gentle playing of David Bridie. You can even forgive the Acme birdsong sound effects, which are superfluously kitsch to say the least. These instrumentals are all fairly much in the same tempo — a semi-slow, downbeat feel that suits Bridie's delicate touch on the black and whites.

That same sombre touch is there for the vocal tracks as well. Not Drowning, Waving seem to have an aversion to anything that's even slightly optimistic or upvibe. While the piano pieces thrive on this gentility, the vocal tracks tend to sound repetitious and dull — in places, downright hippyish — proving that Bridie's obvious gift does not necessarily extend to writing and arranging lyrics or selecting vocalists.

Having said all that, it should also be noted that this is one of the prettiest albums of 1984 (it just scraped in last December). A rare find, with promise of interesting things awash down Melbourne way. Despite its occasional lyrical and vocal shortcomings, *Another Pond* is a successful debut — the exquisite piano playing of David Bridie and inspired guitarwork of John Phillips make that possible.

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF



Ian Anderson threatened by large bouncer (Pic: Ian Greene)

JETHRO TULL
(Entertainment Centre, Sydney)

You may think Ian Anderson is a pompous, posing, prancing, prosperous, ponce who flaunts his flute with phallic fanaticism; but when he plays it, rather than *with* it, the instrument's nocturnal emissions are not at all hard to swallow — tonight the audience positively lapped them up, as it were.

Anderson's (I wish the ignorant wouldn't call him Jethro Tull) flute playing is legendary. Though his tone may be a bit windy on the upper registers, the rest of his eclectic technique is exemplary: he sings, yaps, yelps, grunts and groans into it, extracting honeyed melodies, raucous rifferama, jazzy solos, syncopated fills. And he didn't play it too much, as he did in 1977 when he bored the audience into submission.

This concert was postponed five days due to his throat infection, and Anderson's nasal voice occasionally showed the strain, cracking slightly on a few of the higher notes.

Halfway through, a topless girl dashed across stage — her only musical contribution a G-string. As usual, Anderson cracked a few lewd jokes (?) and bestowed various sexual innuendo on the other members of the group. Some of the audience laughed, others groaned. I waited with tapping feet for more music. (Ever tried tapping your feet to modern Tull? No? Then try epilepsy sometime, or try tapping three feet at once).

Guitarist Martin Barre, a shy fellow who wouldn't dream of smashing his custom made Gibson, switched between rhythm and lead fluidly, filling out here, driving there, soloing in the clouds — though his feet were grounded firmly in the swirling Tull rhythms.

It took a while for drummer Doane Perry to warm up and finally *drive* the band during the aggressive numbers featured in the latter part of the concert. David Pegg (bass) jittered about the stage, adding little to the arrangements as originally played by former Tull bassists. He excelled in the newer songs — sitting on the beat, hanging off the beat, oiling the sprockets, tensioning the springs. Peter Vittesse (keyboards) did an excellent job — considering he did the job of two — playing synth with one hand and strings with the other.

I suppose the audience got what they wanted: older songs, flawlessly played through an excellent PA with a pristine mix, as they have come to expect from Tull over the years. But it was obvious that the group preferred playing the newer, more demanding songs such as *Black Sunday, Hunting Girl,* and *Fly By Night.* Inexplicably, there was nothing at all off the latest album, *Under Wraps* — which would have come across fresh, mean, and nasty live.

Taken as a whole, the concert was a balanced unification of the acoustic and electric elements of Tull, building to a fever of recognition with *Aqualung* and the apocalyptic *Locomotive Breath. Thick As A Brick* was the only blot on the performance. It was played well and appreciated by the audience, but the compressed arrangement was inept; the changes between parts were too quick and jarring — but what can you expect when a piece is cut from forty minutes to ten?

If you missed the concert, the live album (*Bursting Out*) will give you a good idea of what Jethro Tull were like tonight: ie they don't allow much room for improvisation, *or* for error. Calculated, with hardly an element of risk.

JOHN PAUPERIS

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Cooking With George (Festival)

During July and August last year, JJJ collected songs from bands in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne. The idea was to record unsigned acts in a relatively spontaneous manner, using ABC facilities in each city. The end result, in a stunning fluorescent boxed set of five 12-inch EPs, is *Cooking With George*.

The flavours blend well. Electro-funk meets techno-bop, and swamp junk comes along for the ride. Being 45s, the grooves are nice and fat — and some of these bands have put down a huge sound.

I.T. is a good example. On *Dance,* two strong female voices augment a monster funk mix, with scratch effects that are not in the least bit stylised. However *Real Love,* a cynical ode to the lures of the heart, suffers from a wobbly melody and doesn't fare nearly as well.

Brisbane-based **Dance Theatre** on the other hand are highly promising. *Another Day,* with its Enoesque melody, precedes *Laugh It Loud,* a chant with a positively pneumatic bass line.

The second platter is dark and foreboding. Real rock and roll perhaps, but dead all the same. I'm glad these two bands were lumped on the same record so I can leave it at the bottom of the box. Crawling out of choice lyrics like *'up some speed/tokin' on some weed/lookin' for a roadhouse/dyin' for a feed/cops comin' up behind/We just laugh, we don't mind...'* are Brisbane's **Skel-E-Tones,** with their 'song' *Auto Go Go. 'Happy days are here again,'* sing Melbourne's **Huxton Creepers** to the grim strains of a funeral dirge. Eurrgh.

Back to the music. The next record is a totally Sydney disc, produced by Norbert Roth, and it's a good one. The **Great Outdoors** have recorded two punchy tunes, *real* tunes, with melody, harmonies and choruses too. This is Gunther Berghofer's own band, a unit with a strong, spare sound.

Poles Apart suffer slightly in coming up second on the side, but the wait is worth it. *Tropical Air* is a dreamy heatwave in a glorious 5/4 beat, a seducer and a genuine stayer. *Waterfall,* however, was the trump in their repertoire when these sessions took place — it's similarly exotic, yet has its own curious sense of propulsion. Lead vocalist Gabrielle Young has a striking voice — divalike, distinctive and getting better all the time, as is the entire unit. Relentlessly creative.

Record number four is my favourite in the set; the **Seamonsters** (Sydney) and **The Shower Scene From Psycho** (Melbourne) are almost delightful back-to-back. Seamonsters' material recalls their recent single — it's not so much the songs themselves (expressive rhythmic ditties), but the delivery which makes this band sound great. A must-catch on the local circuit. The Shower Scene From Psycho — joy of joys, a fun-laden mutant pop groove, this; two melodious-as-heaven cover tunes rendered utterly blissful. Sweet, clean and wholesome.

The last platter features the funk-ridden bands, in a pointed gesture to dance freaks. The latest big thing from Melbourne, **I'm Talking** blow it first up with a duff workout of a great song, *Here, There And Everywhere.* The vocals are good, great in fact, but as a whole the song refuses to groove (their current single is much better). *Scratching* is interesting, a scratchy funk groove with the odd found voice — Kate Ceberano, their young singer, is the true star of this show.

First through the speakers on the other side is Sydney's **Flotsam Jetsam,** whose *R27's In God-like Intercession* is even better than its title. It's breezy, funky and extremely danceable. Another band to check out for your own ears.

A band I *have* checked out (at least a dozen times in '84) is Adelaide's **Shake 288.** They're probably the most determinedly electronic band on this set, but they still possess a thoroughly organic edge both in the studio and especially onstage. I debate the inclusion of *Beaten To A Pulp* over *Constructive Unemployment,* but there you are. It and *No Death* are definitive of this gang's techno-pop-funk-bop. The world will love them — especially Michael Modson and his incredible fretless bass, which can melt an audience at fifty feet.

So there it is, a mixed box of music. I can't think of anything else quite like it; it may not be the exact state of the nation, but it's undeniably an ear-opening compilation. Thank you, JJJ, for making the effort.

JEREMY BENDER

DEEP PURPLE
Perfect Strangers (PolyGram)

Anyone who has a working knowledge of Deep Purple and its spinoff bands — Rainbow, Gillan and Whitesnake — should be very pleased that the long-awaited reunion of the revered Mk II lineup has finally come to pass. Not only does *Perfect Strangers* move on from previous DP albums, it's also a follow up to the other bands, and tends to help suppress the memory of Coverdale's crass lyrics and albums like 'Last Concert In Japan'.

A lot of the themes of the spin offs have been redefined here, as if to say "this is where we've been for the last ten years, and now we're going on to something better".

Perfect Strangers is a solid, precise album, slightly flawed with a faint sense of deja vu. Three tracks stand out: *Knocking At Your Back Door,* the opening track, recalls the *'Jaws'* theme at the start, but builds into a classic Purple riff with its images of tongue-in-cheek (ahem) sexuality; *Nobody's Home,* the only song written by the whole band (like the old days), really propels the distinctive sound of the band into the 80s; and *Hungry Daze* captures those days of craziness and desperation at the top in the early 70s.

In places the songs are very reminiscent of the last two or three Rainbow albums, due to the fact that Blackmore and Glover wrote the music for seven of the eight songs with Gillan and Glover writing the lyrics. But DP sounds much more cohesive than Rainbow, like they've been waiting to get back together for ten years.

In 1972, *Machine Head* was a standout album; the same can't be said for *Perfect Strangers*, but this is a better, more consistent effort than the majority of the various members' solo material, and points to the next one being a killer.

No NWHM band can come close to this for depth and power; Glover's crisp production and Gillan's powerhouse voice — which doesn't roar or scream or yell as much as so called competitors — stomp all over your typical metal band indulging in stack-heel posturing and emasculated whining.

Buy the album, prepare for the next; in the words of the prophet, it's gonna be a biggie. If you've lost faith over the years, this will go a long way towards restoring it.

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Editorial Assistant
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Secretary/Subscriptions
Sandie Kiely
Advertising
Phil Stafford/Sandie Kiely
Ph (02) 331 6136
Contributors
J.J. Adams
Adele Barnett
Frank Brunetti
Terry Byrnes
Jon Casimir
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Illustrations
Chris Stafford
Pix
Mark Green
Ian Greene
Regina Haysom
Bob King
Francine McDougall
Tom Stack
Tom Takacs
Tasso Taraboulsi
Rhonda Thwaite
Gig Listings
Justin Brophy
Ph (02) 331 6136

PUBLISHER: P.A. Stafford, Lewisham, NSW. PROPRIETOR: AGELESS PRESS, 3/52 Francis St, Darlinghurst NSW 2010. PRINTERS: MEDIA PRESS (Sales) Pty Ltd, 7 Garner's Ave, Marrickville NSW 2204. PHOTOSETTERS: GET SET Typesetting Pty Ltd, 200 Crown St, Darlinghurst NSW 2010.

RAM is distributed in Australia and New Zealand by NETWORK DISTRIBUTION COMPANY, 54-58 Park St, Sydney NSW 2000.

RAM is a WHOLLY INDEPENDENT publication.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE:
RAM, 3rd Floor,
52 Francis St,
DARLINGHURST NSW 2010
AUSTRALIA.
PHONES: (02) 331 2591
(02) 331 6136
TELEX: AA21822

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